

# **THE FORM AND MEANING OF OTJIHERERO PRAISES**

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## ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this thesis is to investigate the form and meaning of Otjiherero praises in order to pinpoint their essential features. The main focus of the analyses of praise texts falls on the distribution of information and how the information status shapes the structure and meaning of the praise. The interactions and relations between internal entities of linguistic expressions that convey the required meaning and effect are interpreted to characterize the overall pattern of Otjiherero praises and the meaning conveyed by such structures. Therefore the thesis aims to pinpoint the manner and purpose of praising the topic in question. It tries to discover how the oral poet **arranges** and **expresses** the information and how he **presents** it in linguistic expressions and what he **means** by that linguistically expressed information. This is to explore what the oral poets do with the language, the way experience, facts and imagination are linguistically organised.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part is the overview which defines praises and explains their uses in the community and outlines the sources of praises. The second part is about approaches and their application to Otjiherero praise texts (analyses and interpretation), followed by a conclusion that brings the thesis to a close.

The first part consists of eight short chapters. Chapter 1 is a general introduction concerning the situation of African languages and oral literatures in Namibia with special focus on Otjiherero oral literature. Chapter 2 is a classification of Otjiherero oral poetic genres. The explanation of how they are intertwined and the distinctions between them will be made in chapter 4. Chapter 3 defines the genre of praise and explains its functions. Chapter 4 explains how praises are used in different discourses and performance in our socio-cultural contexts. Chapter 5 is about sources of praises in the Ovaherero community and explains the subjects of praising, in so doing it introduces the broader social context in which oral poets operate. Chapter 6 is about the oral poet and his art and explains how an oral poet acquires praises as well as his literary competence. Chapter 7 summarises the data analysed in this thesis. Chapter 8 reviews the relevant literature. It discusses other

works on Otjiherero oral poetic genres.

The second part comprises the last three chapters. Chapter 9 explains the approaches and interpretative procedures used to analyse praises in this study. Chapter 10 deals with the analysis of praise texts. Chapter 11 closes the thesis with summaries of findings, and with a general conclusion.



## Errata Sheet

p.228, epithet 25, line 10 should read: waKarukua

p.233, epithet 34, line 77 should read: *tate*

p.235, epithet 34, line 141 should read: ngwa *tjirwa norukoro kokure*

p.235, epithet 34, line 153 - 5 should read: ngwa *ruruma ondjombo*

vaKandjoz'  
otjisena

p.236, epithet 34, line 172 should read: *omumumandu*

p.236, epithet 34, line 203 should read: rwaKahako

p.238, epithet 34, line 294 - 5 should read: aave *nangaasi maku mave hene*

nangwari ke nakuhena

p.248, epithet 21, line 19 should read: while *married*

p.251, epithet 27, line 1 should read: *faraway faraway*

p.254, epithet 34, line 24 should read: that *seen*

on *flashes*

p.255, epithet 34, line 48 - 53 should read:

"when did I water them  
bulls and cows and *oxen*

of *theirs*

I saw them once  
when they drank  
and went up  
*while water dropped to the ground*

*from their beards"*

p.255, epithet 34, line 63 should read: with *will*

*bad*

p.256, epithet 34, line 86-7 should read:

when *the goat*

at *the homestead bleats*

and when *the fire*

at *the homestead flashes*

p.256, epithet 34, line 94 should read: Kaurindumbi

p.256, epithet 34, line 106 should read: that *puts the stick*

on *knee*

p.256, epithet 34, line 109 should read: it *looks*

*nice at the wells*

p. 257, epithet 34, line 157 should read: whom *they said*

*is a coward*

p.258, epithet 34, line 186 should read: he *spoke*

*once at the fence*

p.259, epithet 34, line 264 should read: Kaembimbi

p.260, epithet 34, line 295 - 6 should read: of *the mother*

of *Nauanga*

p.260, epithet 34, line 301 - 2 should read: it *sent*

*persons*  
*three*

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## Abbreviations

cf.	compare
ClasM	class marker
ComparM	comparative marker
Comp	complement
conj	conjunction
Epith	epithet
hab	habitual
Hw	headword
HwP	headword phrase
Kw	keyword
KwP	keyword phrase
LinkE	linking element
lit.	literally
LocM	locative marker
MSORP	Michael Scott Oral Records Project
NoA	nominal agreement
NP	noun phrase
Obj	object
pl	plural form
PosM	possessive marker
Poss	possessor
pres	present
PrS	praise sentence
R-E	referent-epithet
Ref	referent
RelM	relative marker
SC	subject concord
sg	singular form
Subj	subject



SVO	subject verb object
V	verb
VP	verb phrase

## **PART ONE: OVERVIEW**

This part is the overview which defines praises and explains their uses in the community and outlines the sources of praises. It gives a general introduction concerning the situation of African languages and oral literatures in Namibia with special focus on Otjiherero oral literature. It classifies Otjiherero oral poetic genres, defines the genre of praise and explains its functions and explains the ways in which praises are used in different discourses and performance in our socio-cultural contexts. It also explains the sources of praises in the Ovaherero community, explains how an oral poet acquires praises as well as his literary competence, summarises the data analysed in this thesis, and finally discusses other works on Otjiherero oral poetic genres.

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter gives a general introduction concerning the situation of African languages and oral literatures in Namibia with special focus on Otjiherero oral literature. Before giving a general overview of oral literature in Namibia in general and in Otjiherero in particular, I will make brief remarks about the Otjiherero language.

Otjiherero is a South Western Bantu language. It is spoken mainly in Namibia, and outside its borders in Botswana and Angola. Guthrie (1948) classifies it under Zone R in group 30. From a typological point of view, it is an agglutinative language, in which various affixes may be added to the radical of a word to add to its meaning or to show its grammatical function. As Kolbe (1883: ix) puts it “the principal root of a word cannot, as a rule, become modified by inflections; it remains intact, whilst the several relational or formative elements are agglutinated to it”. Affixes and concords (or markers) play important referential roles in Otjiherero grammar.

The first pioneers of the study of Namibian African languages were missionaries in the nineteenth century. Their main purposes were to learn the languages themselves and to teach the Namibians to read and to understand the Bible. They wrote and published dictionaries, grammars and collections of folktales and attached them as appendices to their publications. It seems as if they ignored or had negative attitudes towards the oral poetry such as praises. Their attitudes towards African languages, specifically to oral poetry are observed by Ohly (1990:2):

“the attitude of the missionaries to oral poetry can be understood as threefold: (a) they suppressed it in order to replace it with Christian songs; (b) they had difficulty in understanding its sophisticated structures and therefore could not use it, . . . or (c) they marginalised it as oral creativity on a low level”.

In spite of their pioneering attempts, the Namibian African languages are still among the least studied African languages in the whole of Africa. Although these languages can be classified as ‘developing languages’, scientific studies of their grammatical structures and literature are lacking. Thorough grammatical, literary and stylistic studies of our languages are still of vital importance for the enhancement and acceleration of their development.

The grammatical studies are much advanced compared with the development of literary studies of both oral and written literature.

According to Knappert<sup>1</sup> (1981:8) “the essence of any literature is that it has artistic value, structured beauty, and in addition is capable of influencing profoundly the community for which it is created”. This essence can only be explained scientifically when the oral literature is researched, studied and

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<sup>1</sup> His book is inaccurate and confusing. It seems he did library research and wrote the book. He had mistaken Ovaherero for Damara, because in some early missionaries’, colonists’ and traders’ literatures the Ovaherero are referred to as ‘Cattle Damara’ or just ‘Damara’. See detailed reviews of this book by Megan Bieseke in *Research in African Literatures* 14,3: 405-7 (1983) and W. Haacke in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 79,6 (1984).

described.

Ohly (1991:286) rightly remarks that:

"with the exception of S Schmidt's deep analysis of Khoesan, and especially Nama and Damara folkloristic creativity, all other language groups, viz. Bantu, have been largely ignored. There exist only limited and infrequent anthologies of prose narratives by T E Tirronen on Ndonga, and by E Dammann on Herero oral prose and poetry. Other authors, such as C Büttner, H Brincker and H Beiderbecke, have published some tales in journals and as appendices to their works".

In Namibia hardly any scientific analysis or literary studies of oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular have been undertaken.

This study focuses on a detailed analysis and interpretation of Otjiherero praises as part and parcel of our popular culture.

Although folklore is a complex concept we mainly make a distinction between prose and poetic genres. As this study focuses on the interpretation of praises as a form of poetic genre, the following chapter makes a classification of oral poetic genres only.

## 2. Classification of Oral Poetic Genres

This chapter classifies Otjiherero oral poetic genres. The explanation of how they are intertwined and the distinctions between them will be made in chapter 4.

Classification of oral poetic genres is a difficult task, since in practice they overlap and interact with one another, and hence their effect, form and meaning are fused as well. Although poetic genres in Otjiherero are difficult to classify, in this section an attempt is made to identify those genres that exhibit poetic characteristics, such as rhythmic patterning and phrasing, rhyme, assonance or alliteration with the use of figures of speech, words with unusual shades of meaning, idiomatic expressions and parallelism.

As far as classification of Otjiherero oral poetic genres is concerned, Ohly (1990:4) states:

"Dammann does not use the term 'poem'. Instead he classifies the compositions as either 'Lieder' (songs), indicating their connection with specific dances; or specifically as 'Preislieder' (praise-songs) (Dammann op. cit: 227). Alnaes (op.cit.) refers to songs. Sulzer (op. cit. 6) on the other hand, distinguishes between 'Preisgedichte' (praise-poems) and 'Verse' (poetical lines). The difference is based on the manner in which these oral compositions were presented to the collector. The compositions recorded by Dammann (op. cit) and Alnaes were sung to them and the corresponding dance demonstrated, while Sulzer's compositions appeared in written form in a journal. Consequently Dammann (loc. cit.) used, on the one hand, names of dances to indicate genre: (1) *omuhiva* 'men's dance' (2) *outjina* 'women's dance' and (3) *ombimbi* 'hunting/warrior's dance'. On the other hand, he distinguishes between (4) *omuimbo* 'song'; (5) *eimburiro* 'improvised song' (6) *omutango* 'praise-song on people', especially of heroic content; (7) *omuṭandu*<sup>2</sup> 'praise-song', espec. on places but also on persons, for instance, at funerals; and *otjiyano* 'praise-song' in general."

Further on Ohly (1990: 5) himself classifies oral poetic genres as in the following quotation:

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<sup>2</sup> The correct spelling is *omuṭanḁu*. Note that foreign words in English sentences are italicized.

"Applying European terminology, Herero poetry can then be divided into threnodies and monodies, that is, songs of lamentation, funeral songs, and mournful song-poems lamenting a death respectively. Another genre would comprise laudations praising places and animals. In many cases, however, it would be difficult and perhaps inappropriate to draw such exact dividing lines."

Because of the overlapping and interacting nature of poetic genres, Dammann's, Sulzer's and Henrichsen's (1998) classifications of Otjiherero oral poetic genres are to a certain extent confusing, because for an insider for instance *omutango* and *omuṭandu* are synonyms and can be used interchangeably. Classifying them as two different genres will be confusing. *Otjiyano* differs from *omutango* and *omuṭandu* in the sense that it refers to the praise of the matrilineage of one's paternal grandfather. The basic meaning of *omuimbo* 'song' is extended, and presently used loosely as a general term for poetry. *Ombimbi* is rather a song than a dance, because it lacks the harmony of singing, clapping and stamping. It is a dramatic improvised song. One more example, for a native speaker, *eimburiro* means a hymn with western religious connotations.

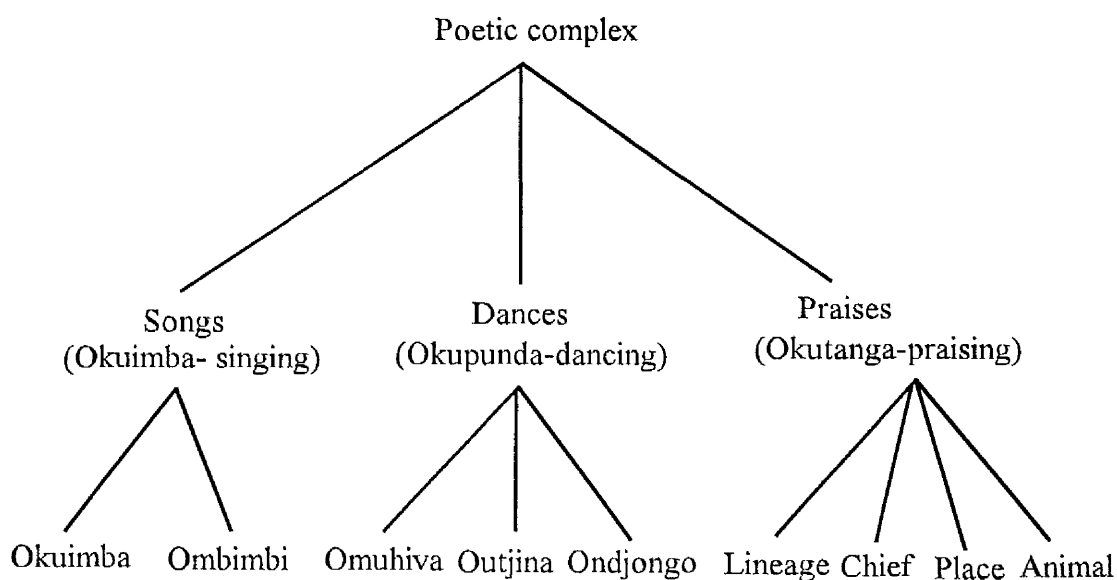
Ohly's classification sheds light, but he also realizes the problematic nature of classifying these genres. In addition to that, Dan Ben-Amos (1977:3) has made a valid point that:

"the names of folklore forms reflect their cultural conception and significance. The semantic components of such terms constitute sets of features which the speakers of a language regard as primary qualities of each verbal form. These are the characteristics of a genre which signify the symbolic meaning of a given form in a culture."

To come closer to a clear classification, the modes of performance should be taken as the basic classificatory criteria, such as chanting a praise, singing a song, dancing a dance. Therefore a classification that is based on these verbs which reveals the modes of performance: *okutanga* 'to praise', *okuimba* 'to sing' and *okupunda* 'to dance' may form the basis, since the nouns are derived from them are used by Ovaherero themselves to make a distinction between these genres.

Hopefully, the following classification serves our clarificatory purpose<sup>3</sup>:

*Diagram 1: Classification of Oral Poetic Genres*



This thesis focuses on the praise genre. Why praise? I believe that research is a search for an understanding when what a person is hearing baffles him. Praises are the most allusive and complex form of our oral tradition and the most favoured by the community.

In communities where social bonds are strong, the sense of belonging is a significant social desire. Human beings as a result of qualities inherent in their human nature tend to live in societies rather than in solitude. Praises are rich in allusions to entities and personalities some of whose significance has been lost in the course of time. Most of the allusions are expressed in possessive constructions. Thus possessives imply human needs or desires for unity and co-operation, and also serve as social ties that link present with past, individuals with

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<sup>3</sup> The Otjiherero terms in the diagram are explained in chapter 4.

the community and the living with the dead. Praises link individuals to their patrilineal and matrilineal ancestors, to heroes, to the important events in the past and remind them of their history. They also link them to important locations such as their places of birth, to places where important events happened and to their and their ancestors' places of burial, though these are done in an allusive poetic way. Their attachment to all these is highly valued and favoured. In this sense possessives in praises serve as convivial features that manifest enjoyment of an individual as a member of a particular patrilineage, matrilineage, homestead, village and community. Thus praises are a sort of concise encyclopaedic source of knowledge presented in a stylistic or poetic fashion. Nobody hates wisdom and knowledge, therefore listening to praising is an act of great interest in our community, and oral poets are respected carriers of our culture, tradition and history, and they are experts to whom people turn for cultural and historic information. Praises are widely intertwined with all sorts of social performances and discourses. A discourse spiced with praises is highly valued. In this way, praises may be described as the spice with which our oral tradition is eaten (see chapter 4).



### 3. Definition and Functions of the Genre: Praise

“What we admire we praise, and when we praise, advance it into notice.”  
(Cowper<sup>4</sup>)

#### 3.1 Definition

This section defines the praise genre as used in many African societies in general and in Otjiherero in particular.

Barber (1991:1) defines praises in Yoruba as "compact and evocative, enigmatic and arresting formulations, utterances which are believed to capture the essential qualities of their subjects, and by being uttered, to evoke them".

Further on (1991:1) she states that praises are "attributions or appellations: collections of epithets, pithy or elaborated, which are addressed to a subject". These attributions are marks or indications by means of which a subject of praise may be identified and its constitution understood. Cope (1968:21) quotes Krige as saying

"praises are an important instrument in the educational system. Not only do they act as an incentive and reward for socially approved actions, but their recital is a reminder to all present what qualities and conduct are considered praise worthy".

According to Barber (1991:14) praises are threads that lead back into an otherwise irrecoverable social history, and they are, as Vail and White (1991:40) put it, 'maps of experience'. According to Damane and Sanders (1974:59) they "are not historical narratives, but poetry with historical allusions, . . . accuracy and clarity have been sacrificed for the sake of eulogy and aesthetic excellence".

---

<sup>4</sup> This saying is obtained from Webster (1984:626). According to Webster, William Cowper was an English poet who lived from 1731 to 1800.

Further on Cope (1968:39) defines praises as images that are evocative and emotive: evocative in that they stimulate the imagination and emotive in that they stir the emotions.

At this point it is appropriate to summarise these definitions. Praises are allusive, compact, socio-historical, genealogical, imaginative and eulogistic utterances which are believed to capture and evoke the essential qualities of the referent, and to identify it.

These definitions hold water for praises in those African societies in which praise tradition is practised. The condensed allusive information encoded in praises makes them incomprehensible specifically if one misses the point of relating them adequately to the culture, history and genealogy of the particular community and/or topic of praising. Therefore relating praises to their historical and cultural contexts gives important clues which aid interpretation and understanding. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss social and cultural contexts in which Otjiherero praises are performed in order to prepare the ground for their analysis in the following chapters.

In general praises have important functions to fulfil in the community. Their functions are summarized in the following section.

### **3.2 Functions**

The definition of praises in the preceding section leads to the summary of the functions of praises in general. Praises are a means of communication that serve as:

- a source of pride, recognition and admiration. They accumulate a personal repertoire of qualities and actions that become apparent in a referent's life-time, such as praise-worthy experiences, actions, events, episodes etc;

- an accumulation of fragments of historical and genealogical facts;
- an expression of communal and personal opinions;
- a reflection of personal, cultural, social and spiritual values and identity;
- an instrument enhancing education - setting moral goals and enriching contemporary knowledge and experiences;
- an exhibition of artistic values;
- a connection of periods and individuals;
- a means of entertainment;
- an ornament adorning discourses.

The relevance of these definitions and functions to Otjiherero praises will become clearer in the interpretation and discussion of praises in chapter 10 and 11.

The following chapter discusses the inclusion or incorporation of praises or pieces of praises in different discourses of everyday life.

#### 4. Praises are Spice with which Words are Eaten

“Listening to poetry is thus not only an artistic pleasure, but provides [us] with fascinating intellectual exercise of decoding the veiled speech of the poet’s message.”

(Andrzejewski 1964:43-4)

This chapter explains how praises are used in different discourses and performance in our socio-cultural contexts. Here, Chinua Achebe's (1958:6) well known proverb "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" is adopted and adapted to fit our circumstance. In Otjiherero, spice is a substance which makes food perceptible to the gustatory sense. Here the concept spice is metaphorically compared to praises in the sense that praises are substance of speech that stimulates a poignant tang of words - that stir the innermost consciousness of the audience. Praises stimulate and freshen the interest of the audience, as Barber (1991:12-3) observes they are constructed with "heavy words, fused together into formulations that have exceptional density and sensuous weight".

Because of the omnipresent nature of the praise genre in everyday Otjiherero discourses, it can be defined as a ubiquitous genre. Presumably, it forms a foundation from which discourses and probably thinking patterns in our cultural set up take off.

Therefore, praises are most continually presented in the performances of other genres and they are highly valued, and deeply cherished by many people in our community. They are regarded as the highest form of our oral expression. The position of praises as a foundation genre may be seen from their manifold manifestations in daily discourses. The occurrence of praises in dances, songs, wailing dirges, addresses to ancestors, ceremonies, speeches, folktales, modern literature and modern music is discussed in the following sections in turns.

#### 4.1 Praises within Dances

Praises are not divorced from our performances, they are incorporated in all types of dances.

Ovaherero have three types of dances, that is *omuhiva*, *outjina* and *ondjongo*. Dances are largely characterized by a harmony of stamping of feet, clapping of hands and singing. For them, dances are modes of communication and action with the aim of entertaining participants and the audience. In general dances are performed at various festivals, such as marriages, sacrifices, commemorations, circumcisions and other cultural festivities and rituals. In these real social circumstances, praises are part and parcel of dances, as discussed in what is about to follow.

##### (a) Omuhiva

This dance is largely performed in the evening by the main performer, that is the dancer '*ombunde*', literally 'stamper', and the participants '*ovahakere*', literally 'clappers'. The dancer is usually a man and the participants are women. The dancer stamps his feet harmoniously to the rhythm of singing and clapping of hands by the participants. There is a crowd of spectators forming the audience.

Normally the dancer leads the whole proceeding. He starts off with a praise of the topic of the dance and praises it. There are well known dancers of this dance such as Kaporise Kuvare, Kaserandu Kavari, Jod Hengua and Toosere Kuvare just to name a few. Here I cite an extract from a dance performed by Toosere Kuvare at a circumcision festival at Kamaendo's homestead at Otjiṭoko<sup>5</sup>, recorded by me on 24 September 1998.

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<sup>5</sup> This is an extract from the whole dance text. This dance is about the favourite ox of the dancer himself. The underlined parts in the text are praises.

Toosere: Ngero ngero ngero ngero ngeroo<sup>6</sup> ngeroo!  
Last born last born last born last born

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo  
Last born return our ox to its place

### PAUSE<sup>7</sup>

Toosere: Ngeer' ove! Ngero ongombe yetu yaTjimanangombe yondimba  
yaNambunga. Ngeer' ove! Ozongombe zetu mu mwa tjirwa  
omuatje waKarukua na Nangombe yaMunduva ingw' omaraveho  
ngwa rukwa mapeta aay' opa kwatwa. A kwaterwa kovikoro  
vyombepo nezikiziki. Wa tjirwa pu novandu vOviṭopora. Wa  
tjirwa pu nomuatje waTjondondo hamukwetu ekura andje omahuri  
nge ha rara. Tji va tjirwa kongwe yaNandendu.  
*Eeee* ngero! Wa tja aze kunguna. Muatje waKarukua na Nangombe  
yaMunduva. Wa tja aze kunguna. OzaTjirambi tjaKahend' ombind'  
ombwa hi namatungu our' ouwa hi namahoro. Wa tja maze  
kungun' omuatje waTjondondo.

Last born you! Last born our ox of Tjimanangombe of the  
spotted throat of Nambunga. Last born you! Our cattle in  
which the child of Karukua and Nangombe of Munduva the  
one with deep eyes who was named at sunset as if he was  
born at dusk spent the morning. Who was born at the  
hillside with wind and windstorm. He spent the morning  
with people of Oviṭopora. He spent the morning with the  
child of Tjondondo my friend the livers that are not left  
uncooked till the next day. They spent the morning at the  
leopard of Nandendu. *Eeee* last born! He said they do not  
trot. Child of Karukua and Nangombe of Munduva. He said  
they do not trot. They are of Tjirambi of Kahenda the nice

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<sup>6</sup> Note that in singing sometimes the vowels are drawn out.

<sup>7</sup> This brief pause in the dance is to give the dancer a chance to praise the topic.

blood I do not have clots the nice intestines I do not have  
wooden vessels. He said they will trot the child of  
Tjondondo.

## DANCE RESUMED

Participants: Kotor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo!

Return our ox to its place

Toosere: Ngero ongombe yaNdakuzu ngero!

Last born the ox of Ndakuzu last born!

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo

Last born return our ox to its place

Toosere: Ngero ngero ngero onduwombe yaKamiangaviruru osembasembe  
yokomband' otuvanda ngero! Ngero ongombe yetu ngero!

Last born last born last born the ox of Kamiangaviruru the  
smell-smell on the small hills last born! Last born our ox  
last born!

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo

Last born return our ox to its place

Toosere: Ngeroo ngero! Mbungu yaMutjimba yaKareku' otjiseмба narir'  
otjirovazu. Ngero ngero ngero ngero!

Last born last born! The hyena of Mutjimba of Karukua the  
grey spotted and blackish grey. Last born last born last born  
last born!

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo

Last born return our ox to its place

Toosere: Ngero ongombe yaNdakuzu ngero!

Last born the ox of Ndakuzu last born!

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo

Last born return our ox to its place

## PAUSE<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This pause is meant to give the participants a breathing space of a few seconds, while listening to the dancer who is praising his favourite ox.

Toosere: Ngeer' ove ngeer' ove! Ongombe yet' onduwombe. *Eee*  
zouwokoro outiti nde ryanga kozonusu otjozaNdjiva. Nde kandwa  
morupanda ape ryang' ombwa yaKatjaningororo. Nde tjinda  
mongand' ape ryang' etunguuze. Zozondungweho otjovindandi  
vyanavi nde tar' omukazendu ngwe ze kanda. Eeee! Ngeero!  
Ozongombe zetu zozondja kovitama otjovasuko vokuti ngwi.  
Ngeero ongombe yetu! Nambano ozongombe nde ekurire nekura  
andje otjowaHauta nowaNgomb' ondjandja osepande orukopo  
rwaViana. Nambano ozombambi kaz' ozombiryona ngeero!  
Ngeero ongombe yaNdakuzu!

Last born you, last born you! Our cattle is the ox. *Eee* with  
small forelegs with thick behind like those of Ndjiva. An ant  
walks around in the homestead after they had been milked.  
A beetle walks around in the homestead after they had been  
moved. With sharp eyes as if untamed that look at the  
woman who milked them. Eeee! Last born! Our cattle with  
marks on the cheeks like women of this place. Last born  
our cattle! Now the cattle which I chased together with my  
friend like the one of Hauta and of Ngombe the brown  
spotted the scarcity like the marriage of Viana. Now they  
are blackish brown they are not brown with spots on sides,  
last born! Last born the ox of Ndakuzu!

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo  
 Last born return our ox to its place

Toosere: Yoomukaza Kozombindi zaTjambi komahoro waTjitjo waNguana  
omawa wotuunda nge zikwa nu nge ha unguka. Ongombe  
yoomukaa Kakunde. Ngero!

Of the wife of Kozombindi of Tjambi at the wooden vessels  
of Tjitjo of Nguana that are put down and do not tip. The  
ox of the wives of Kakunde. Last born!

Participants: Ngeroo kotoor' ongombe yeetu kehi raayo



## Last born return our ox to its place

The topic of this above dance is the favourite ox of the dancer himself which grew very big. In 1990 his younger brother took the cattle to Ondjombo near Okavare where pasture was green because of early rains at that place. The dancer was longing for his favourite ox and created or sang this dance for the first time.

This singing is harmonised with the stamping of feet, singing and clapping of hands, which continues until the dancer stops them and continues to chant the praises. The dancer stops the women by stopping stamping, and chants the praises and suddenly shifts the chanting mode into singing and starts stamping again and the dance resumes. It is performed with shifting intervals, but he also praises the topic while dancing and participants are singing and clapping. The singing-dancing mode is a combination of praising, singing, dancing, stamping, and clapping that are simultaneously performed. Sometimes the dancer chants praises while dancing and while the participants are singing and clapping their hands.

The song and the praise are actually different, but are both related to the same topic of the dance. In this case the praises inside the dance are also referred to as *omitjazi*<sup>9</sup>. During this dance, singing occurs in both prose and poetic mode.

Here the dancer plays with the praise as he likes. Therefore Barber's (1991:23) observation about Yoruba *oriki* holds for Otjiherero praises that a praise is "not significantly affected by the removal of one part or rearrangement of others". This point is pursued further in the discussion of versions of the Okahandja praise in chapter 10, section 10.2. Thus the oral poet chants fragments of different praises when he thinks they are relevant to the topic of the particular dance.

The dancer who colours his dances with praises is considered to be the excellent dancer, and also when he mimics the topic of the dance accurately - mainly when

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<sup>9</sup> This term is only used in Kaokoland.

he succeeds in making sport of the subject's movements, gestures, voice, mannerisms etc. Two or more dancers may dance a dance about the same topic, but each praises that topic differently. One may chant short pieces of the praise of the topic and the other may praise it excessively. This depends greatly on the dancer's store of praises.

**(b) Outjina**

This dance used to be exclusively performed by women, but today there are men who are excellent performers of it. The example given below is from a woman dancer. The dancer leads the performance while her participants clap hands. A plank is fastened to her foot. This plank is used to stamp with to the rhythm of the singing and clapping.

An audience is always present. If the topic of the dance is *Ondundu yaTjozondjupa* (Waterberg), then the dance will proceed as follows:

Dancer:       Ndundu kendjikotore. Ndundu yaTjombua na Kekur' omumbanda.  
                  Nduuuundu kendjikotore!

                  Mountain go and return me. Mountain of Tjombua and  
                  Kekura the younger wife. Mountain go and bring me back.

Participants:   Ondorozi

                  It's a black ...

Dancer:       Ndunduuuuuu kendjikotore

                  Mountain go and bring me back.

Participants:   Ondorozi

                  It's a black ...

(The above example is from my own experience)

The dancer was married and went to the place of her husband but now she is longing for the mountain where she grew up. She wants to go back and that is

why she is now calling for the mountain to come and take her back. In the process, she is praising their black mountain. The underlined part is a part of the praise of the mountain.

**(c) Ondjongo**

Mans (1998) provides a detailed discussion of this dance, which is performed by Ovahimba<sup>10</sup> in Kaokoland. It is performed by men and women. They stand in a circle. One half of a circle is formed by men and the other by women. Although they sing songs related to the same topic, each group sings on its own, and both clap hands harmoniously. The praises are nicely incorporated in the singing process, and they are only recognised with careful listening.

One person jumps into the centre of the circle and starts stamping his feet. The clapping of hands is changed to fit the rhythm of stamping and the singing becomes howling. The dancer indicates the end of his stamping with specific steps. After he has completed stamping, his/her dance name is exclaimed by the women to declare the end of his stamping. Another dancer may jump into the centre of the circle and start dancing.

A text<sup>11</sup> cited below was performed and recorded at Oukongo on 28 September 1998, at an ancestor commemoration festival (*oviyamberero*) at Muharukua's homestead.

**Man half-circle**

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<sup>10</sup> Ovahimba are those Ovaherero who still follow their original traditional way of life. They wear skin clothes and smear the bodies with a mixture of butter and red powder (ground from ochre).

<sup>11</sup> This is about the mesa of Kauhongerue. The term mesa in this case is used to mean a flat-topped mountain.

Hijamburau: Ombaramwa i varamwa *heeee*<sup>12</sup>

Hillside is traversed *heeee*.

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

Himbureau: Ombaramwa yaVingongo *heeee*

Hillside of Vingongo *heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

## **DANCE**

Hijamburau: Ombaramwa i varamwa *heeee*

Hillside is traversed *heeee*.

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

Hijamburau: Ombaramwa yahijaUaire *heeee*

Hillside of the father of Uaire *heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

## **DANCE**

Hijamburau: Ombaramwa i varamwa *heee*

Hillside is traversed *heeee*.

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

Hijamburau: *Yeee heyee yeiyeeeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

Hijamburau: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

## **DANCE**

**Women half-circle** (At this point I moved to the women's half of the circle)

Tjoomuambo: Ombaramwa i varamwa *heeee*

Hillside is traversed *heeee*.

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee ndundu yahiyaUaire* *heeee*

*Ee the mountain of the father of Uaire* *heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeeee*

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<sup>12</sup> This is part of the tune which cannot be translated, and in this position it invites the chorus to come in.

Tjoomuambo: *Ee mutumba ndja ngar' ehoro heeee*

*Ee its standing is like a wooden pail heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee ya ngar' ekandero*

*Ee it's like a milking pail*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Yee yee heiyeeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

## **DANCE**

Tjoomuambo: *Ee oryo ndina heeee*

*Ee it's there heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee etaka ryetu heeee*

*Ee our mesa heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee ri nozohambo pombanda heeee*

*Ee it has cattle posts on top heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee ri nousemo womiya heeee*

*Ee it has small water pools heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee ri noutui mozombango heeee*

*Ee it has little fountains heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Eeee he yeiyeeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee nambano otji rya pirika heeee*

*Ee now it has changed heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Tjoomuambo: *Ee he yeiyeeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

## PAUSE<sup>13</sup>

Uamakera: *Ee etaka ryetu heeee*

*Ee our mesa heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Uamakera: *Ee ri nomatundu ri turwa heeee*

*Ee it has old homesteads where people lived heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Uamakera: *Ee ri nozohambo kokure heeee*

*Ee it has cattle posts very far heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Uamakera: *Ee puree ku Uakatara waTjijombo tjaMahuue heeee*

*Ee ask Uakatara of Tjijombo of Mahuue heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

Uamakera: *Ee kOtjikuina puree ku Kaherero omuzandu waNgorera heeee*

*Ee at Otjikuina ask Kaherero the son of Ngorera heeee*

Group: *Heyeee yeiyeeee*

## DANCE

Praising the mesa is incorporated in the singing process, and praises are only recognizable with careful listening.

### 4.2 Praises within Wailing Dirges

When the message of death is heard, the people go to the particular homestead. Women gather in the main hut, while the men sit in the shade of trees during the day and around the fire in the evening.

In the main hut, wailing, lamenting and chanting are blended. An experienced woman takes the lead by praising the deceased. When she has finished, she

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<sup>13</sup> Nobody entered the centre to dance, thus they took a pause for breath.

indicates the end of her chant by changing her voice and the chorus comes in. The chorus hums a typical continuous tune in a low tone. After the chorus she resumes her lead until she hands over to a particular woman of her choice. This kind of praising moves on until every woman gets a chance to speak. For instance one will say:

Omuzandu wa rara wOmuambo wozohungu ngwa yendere pu mbari  
ooKanga na Tjipanga. Ingwi ngwa ri pongeyama konduwombe yaMuzeu  
yamukaza Komaupa, ku hiyaKakuritjire okonyange imwe kotjiuru ...  
*Oooooooooweeee!*

The son (brave man) is sleeping of the Omuambo of hornless cattle  
who came with two sacred cattle of Kanga and Tjipanga. The one  
who killed the lion at the ox of Muzeu of the wife of Komaupa, at  
the father of Kakuritjire with one hat on his head ...

*Oooooooooweeee!*

(I am unhappy to record this performance with women  
grieving.)

First she chanted the praises of the patrilineage of the deceased, and then she praised the place at which the deceased killed a lion.

During these performances each woman is called upon or referred to through the praise of the place of birth of her husband. For example my mother is called upon during wailing performances as follow:

Itavera mukaa komurikwa mbwa rikw' Mbute Karora ....

Respond the wife of the valley which was crossed by Mbute Karora

...

The underlined is the part of a praise of the place where my father was born.

The single women are addressed through the praises of their mothers who are praised according to the places of birth of their husbands. For example; my single sister is addressed as follows:

Itavera muatje wamukaa komurikwa mbwa rikw' Mbuta Karora ....

Respond child of the wife of valley which was crossed by Mbuta Karora ...

The inexperienced young women would gradually get used to the style and language of this type of chants through participation in funerals. Eventually if the need arises she will be able to lead the weeping performance herself, but they are not compelled to take the lead.

As shown above, the deceased is praised from different angles. His praises include praises of his own, his father's, grandfather's and ancestors' heroic deeds, praise of his lineages as well as his personal successes and behaviour. For this reason Brincker (1886:155) remarks that a wailing dirge is "a narrative lament of women at the side of a deceased, in which his deserved and undeserved virtues are droned in an endless torrent of words". He did not understand that praises animate the past into the present, and the deeds and virtues of the deceased and his or her ancestors are recalled and presented. For an outsider these seem to be a mixture of deserved and undeserved virtues, because for him it is difficult to make out which is for whom, and which is for what. Alnaes (1989) experienced a similar situation. She tape-recorded a wailing dirge which was a carefully organised plan in which women were informing one another that they were being tape-recorded. I also experienced the same, when I was tape recording the dance performance at Otjitoko, as mentioned under *omuhiva* above. Toosere Kuvare, the dancer, in performing, informed the woman participants that they were being tape recorded. I did not notice that, but found it when I was transcribing the tapes. Thus a performer is able to say anything relevant to the circumstances, such as when tape-recording becomes part of the context of the performance.



In the past, the deceased was buried the next day, these days the corpse is taken to a mortuary as the relatives need enough time to make proper funeral arrangements. Now a funeral has become a practice that is mostly done during the weekend in order to allow more people to attend.

The day (nowadays Friday or sometimes Saturday) preceding the burial ceremony, the corpse is brought in before sunset, and a wake is usually held throughout the night during which the women keep on praising, weeping, wailing and howling besides the coffin in the main hut or outside it. Men sit outside around the fire and tell various stories as time passing events.

The close relatives of the deceased are the central performers during the wailing performances. The next morning the coffin is taken to the sacred shrine where the ancestors are informed again about the death. They are requested to distance death from the homestead and this deceased should be the last one. Once again the ancestors are addressed through praises. These praises include their own, father's, ancestors' and lineages' praises.

At the graveyard, a patri- and matrilineal relative are the last speakers to address the crowd, before the church minister concludes the burial ceremony officially with a prayer. They address the audience on behalf of their respective lineages. These two relatives' purposes are to praise the deceased according to their respective lineages as much as they can.

When the deceased is the priest himself or an elderly man or warrior then war songs are sung. When these songs are sung the performance becomes more dramatic.

After the burial ceremony the mourning period starts. During this period the women perform only early in the morning and at sunset. In the past it took several months, but now it takes one to two weeks. During this period many oxen are

slaughtered and their horns are hung on a pole on the west side of the grave as mentioned in Maharero's praise, epithet 14. (See chapter 10, section 10.3.)

### 4.3 Praises and Addresses of Ancestors

When the priest addresses the ancestors for any purpose, he recites their praises and/or praises of places of their births and/or praises of places of their burials. It is not expected of him to recite with dramatic delivery but if he is able to do so, it is welcomed. He may recite as much as he remembers as he is the direct descendant of his ancestors.

My father's brother Vatondovaṭi Kavari, who is the priest of our homestead, on 24 July 1998 at Otuvero addressed the ancestors as follows:

Tate! Owami Vatondovaṭi ngu me mu isana. Mbi ri pezuko reṅu mba me ningire ouveruke me ningire otjiyangapara.

Indjeye amuhe! Tate kongombe yaMundjindjiri yongwe yaKahere yaNavirua ndja petur' ekomb' otjounatj' outiti awa nongw' okururupara<sup>14</sup>, indjo! Tate kotjirongo tjaKahango tjozonguti nda sor' otjozaUtua<sup>15</sup>, indjo! Tate ngu wa kwaterwa kondjerera yaMbinge korui kotjitonge ku ze munik' amaze nu<sup>16</sup>, indjo! Indjeye amuhe pu na Ndjambi! Indjeye mba!

Father! I am Vatondovaṭi who is calling you. I am here at your hearth I am asking for good health and good luck. Come you all! Father at the cattle of Mundjindjiri of the leopard of Kahere with down hanging horns like small mean children, come! Father at the place of Kahango with the doves that sound nicely like those of Outua, come! Father who was born at the light of Mbinge at the

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<sup>14</sup> This is from the praise of a place called Ondore in Kaokoland.

<sup>15</sup> This is an extract from the praise of the place called Okorosave in Kaokoland.

<sup>16</sup> This is extracted from the praise of Ombombo in Kaokoland.

high drinking place where they are seen while they are drinking,  
come! Come all, together with God! Come here!

First, he calls his father and then introduces himself. He tells him the purpose of calling them. After that he lists his ancestors through praises of three different places. The first two underlined clauses are the praises of places where his ancestors were buried, while the last one is of the place where one of his ancestors was born. He does not mention the names of these places, he just refers to them through their praises. See section 11.1.11 for periphrastic description.

#### 4.4 Praises and Marriage Ceremonies

The ancestors are also informed about the marriage, and the marriage discourses are dominated by praises.

Besides the different dances that are performed at this festival, on the first day of the festival, women from the bridegroom's group go to the bride's homestead and sit beside the main hut. When the three cattle<sup>17</sup> come in, they praise them. When the oxen are caught to be slaughtered they come again and do the same. They praise the homestead from which they came, the owner of the cattle and the places through which the cattle travelled. When I married in 1991 at Okaaru, my mother and her group chanted as follows:

Zesa, ze hite! OzahiyaMbinda yongombe yaKatjongua. Za zu kokure  
komuzorombo waTjitoko womainya keraka otjongandu kOmuambo  
waNdura. Za yatakana omipoko mbi ri Kaimba yaHange mbya ry' onyama  
yomeva avi hi ya kupa. Zesa ze hite!

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<sup>17</sup> These cattle are the bridewealth. In Otjiherero they are referred to as *ozongombe zorukupo* 'cattle of marriage'. The ox is known as *oyovitunya* ironically 'food for lovers' (the new couple are not allowed to eat from its meat), the heifer as *oyorutombe* that means literally a heifer of new courtship and the young ox as *oyozondu* 'of sheep' because it replaces four sheep that were brought with cattle in the past.

Leave them, let them enter! They are of father of Mbinda of the cattle of Katjongua. They came from far, from the black Omuambo of Tjitoko with hair on the tongue like a crocodile, the Omuambo of Ndura. They came through the passages of Kaimba of Hange which ate the sacred meat<sup>18</sup> while still unmarried. Leave them, let them enter!

The inclusion of praises in this text makes it more complicated. Simply one might easily say

Leave them, let them enter! They are of Ongweyuva. They came from far, from Otjitoko. They came through the passages. Leave them, let them enter!,

but the point is to praise those who brought and how and why they brought them.

The three underlined words in the second passage replace the praises in the first passage.

On the last day, the new couple is escorted to the sacred shrine to receive marriage warnings from the elders. After the introduction of the new couple to the ancestors (in the same way as discussed in the preceding section), the priest-chief commences the warnings with:

Mbe ku yandja konganda yahiyaMbinda yongombe yaKatjongua ...

I have given you to the homestead of the father of Mbinda of the cattle of Katjongua ...

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<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes there is a certain piece of meat which is selected and cooked at a special hearth or a sheep is slaughtered for a special occasion. This meat is eaten by married men only. This place is personified and praised as if it was a man who ate this sacred meat while he was not entitled to do so because he was unmarried.

#### 4.5 Praises within Songs

In Otjiherero we distinguish two types of traditional songs, *okuimba* and *ombimbi*, as shown above in diagram 2.

##### (a) Ombimbi (war song)

The *ombimbi* is performed by victorious men who successfully managed to kill their enemies, lion, elephant, rhinoceros or leopard. One warrior leads the song while the others participate in reacting to what he is saying. The one who leads may rotate with another one from the group who wants to lead.

This war song is an indication of bravery and manhood. It is an imitation or dramatic song which dramatises the way in which the animal or enemy was killed. In these songs, the actions are vividly mimicked.

The song is led by one warrior while the group is exclaiming 'hiyo' in chorus. These songs are also sung or performed at the funeral of a warrior (or elder) to commemorate his bravery and fighting skills on the battlefield. The example cited below was performed by warriors at the funeral of Chief Mbumbijazo Muharukua, recorded by M. Tjivikua at Opuwo.

Leader: Oweṭ' ovazandu

We are young men (brave men)

Group: *Hiyo!*

Leader: Otjikoro tjandundu ku ku yama ngwa urwa

The slope of a hill on which a tired person leans<sup>19</sup>

Group: *Hiyo!*

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<sup>19</sup> The young men compare themselves with a steep slope of a hill or mountain. In our community masculinity is associated with bravery. In other words they are the protectors of the weak members of the community. That is why they are praised as a hill-slope on which a tired person leans.

Leader: Ngwaaa urwa!  
                     A tired person!

Group: *Hiyo!*

Leader: Katjo ko?  
                     Isn't it true?

Group: *Hiyo!*

Leader: Ee ma?  
                     Isn't it?

Group: *Hiyo!*

The underlined phrase is a general praise for bravery and success which in this case is synonymous with manhood or masculinity.

The exclamation '*hiyo*' as exclaimed by the group of warriors is a confirmation that what the leader is saying is true. Thus it means 'yes, it's true!'.

The war song is normally accompanied by prodigious leaps (*okutona omakamba*<sup>20</sup>). These leaps indicate how they dodge and ward off the blows of (or even catch) the weapons of the enemies. This is simply a demonstration of skills in defending themselves by quick manoeuvres to evade blows while approaching the enemies.

They are welcomed by the ululations (*okurora ondoro*<sup>21</sup>) of women.

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<sup>20</sup> *Okutona omakamba* is synonymously used with *okupera*, meaning parrying or demonstrating skills and adroitness of defending oneself from blows and other threats. These terms are used in Kaokoland where this dexterous demonstration is still practised.

<sup>21</sup> *Okurora ondoro*: These are onomatopoeic vocables derived from *viriririririri*, a very sharp rolling sound made by women to welcome the war song. Both words derive from the same verbal root: *-ror-*. *Okurora* is the verb and *ondoro* the noun. Damane and Sanders (1974:27) refer to such noises as "trilling ululations".

**(b) Okuimba<sup>22</sup>**

This type of song is sung by an individual following a monotonous melody with only minimal variations. Vedder (1938:51) refers to this song as a monotonous sing-song. It is characterised by reiteration of the same idea.

These monotonous narrative songs are only sung in Kaokoland by elders and Ovahimba men. The topics of these songs are generally favourite oxen and history. This is also dominated by praises of lineages, places, etc., that are nicely conjoined with the topic. In my youth an elder, the late Hijakuriuri Tjivahe, used to sing the following song at our homestead in Otuvero.

Nga rire pu yo, nga rire pu yo

Ongombe yatate yaTjivahe tjongombe yaKatjongua

Nga rire pu yo, nga rire pu yo

It should be enough, it should be enough. The ox of my father of Tjivahe of the cattle of Katjongua. It should be enough, it should be enough.

The underlined phrase is a praise of his patrilineage that is nicely conjoined with the song of his favourite ox.

#### **4.6 Praises within Speeches**

Praises also accompany speeches and conversations. This section illustrates how praises are incorporated in informal and formal speeches.

**(a) Informal speeches - conversations**

Praises may be used in informal speeches when adults greet one another, they may

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<sup>22</sup> *Okuimba* means to sing a monotonous solo.

say, for example:

A: Kora muzandu waHinu waTjikuarungu ...

Give us the message son of Hinu of Tjikuarungu ...

B: Hi namambo, mba rara komuzu waMbaatakana waKuhanga. Nu hi zuvire.

I don't have a message, I slept at the baobab of Mbaatakana of Kuhanga. I didn't hear anything.

Speaker A praises speaker B with a praise of the speaker B's grandfather. This is a way of addressing him nicely. He does not mention his name. Speaker B praises the place where he slept without naming it. A third person who does not know these praises, would not be able to identify speaker B, unless he knows him personally. He would not identify the place where speaker B slept, but both speakers know precisely what they are talking about. Anybody who knows these pieces of praises would follow the conversation easily.

When you meet an old man or woman who does not know you, he/she asks you first who your parents are. If he/she knows them, then he/she will utter a praise before he/she greets you. That signifies the fact that he/she knows you well.

When you meet an old man or woman who knows you well, he/she will chant the praise of your father, grandfather or ancestor or a mixture in any direction either from your mother's or father's genealogy. This is an expression of affection.

Nobody hates affection and such greetings induce the pleasure of being praised, independently from its meaning. Even if you do not understand the references, you may feel real gladness and joy, as the words touch that deep-rooted and rapturous emotion within oneself. If one knows one's own praises and one remembers how a grandfather or grandmother used to recite them in the same manner before he/she greeted you, then the happiness evoked may be so great and intense as to be almost painful - it may provoke an aching joy that may lead to tears. For this



reason, praises have become a focal part of our popular culture and of everyday discourse within it.

**(b) Formal speeches - public meetings**

Political and community leaders include praises in their speeches when addressing public meetings. In other words they adorn their speeches with praises.

The cited example is from an extract of a speech by Mr Katuutire Kaura, a political leader, at Mureti Kaupangua's commemoration service at Otjipau in 1987, recorded by a representative of the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) - Otjiherero service. The extract from his speech is as follows:

Matu yandja ondengero kotjiwana atjihe tjOtjikaoko tji tja orongana mba.  
Tji tje ya komatundu wet' omakuru. Nga rimbara mozondundu nda. Tja  
tjinga amamu tjiwa kutja pu twa oronganene mba oomongorotima yehi ndi.  
Oomongorotima yehi ndi, na imba mbe yekukambura ehi ndi, mbe  
yekusosera mehi ndi ovo oveni ve tja oomotjikrone tjehe ndi.

.....(text omitted)

Tji mo har' okuyer' omeho u tare mozondundu ndu maze munika ngwiina,  
oomondwezu yaKakunde kovirungu ku ya ke sewa mondombora  
ozongwao aza taura. Omu mu nomurumendu ingwi Omukwatjivi tate.  
Mbe he mu i mave tja oKorukongo u ri morukongo rwozombwa  
ozondumbu zovizoronyo. Varwe tjiwa mave tja oKarieue. Et' oveni matu  
tja ohi yaKazeireko wongombe yaMbinga yaMuhere ndja hiwa hi nakutja  
ku nozongombe nde hiwa. Maku zu aa yandja ongombe nondjupa owa  
mwari Kandimba. Imbo pozondundu zavo mbo.

.....  
Tji wa har' okuyeruruka u yende mbeena u yende pOkahurimehi.  
Ooponganda yaMungunda yaKujambera kwaNdjamo. Pongombe yaKati  
kaKarorua onduwombe ozonya porwazo pu pe hi namundu.

Tji mamu har' okutaviza mbena pongotwe mu yaruke mbena pOtukaru  
pongombe ondoto Kahengua i ri ku Karipose wa Tjimanamuinjo.

Tji mo har' okukotoka mba, u kotoke pOkanjande. Mu uhara amamu  
hungire oopondjima yakamuseka yovitekainya owa ndji komba. Pu mwa  
yaruka okurukira ovihauto nambano.

Imba pOmbujongue mba oopongwe yomuzandu waMuteta okazorondu  
ngu ya ha yendwa kombunda. U ri oozonungu noviruru ovitaambe.  
Oomomatundu wavo mwi. Kave naa va ri kwarwe uriri. Oomondivitivi  
mongorotima, opu va turire mba.

Omuatje waKaupangua ondjara yaKaoko tji me yekutura mba tjandje ma  
turire ozonganda zOvatjimba ovakwao nda rimbarere mona mwi.

Imba tji mo kotoka mba pErondu pongombe yaMbuti yomuheke omuwa  
mbwa hupirw' ouzuwo ndji ri komusuko waKozonene. Opu za turire mba.

Imba vari mba indji onditi yozondu ongaravize yozongombe onduwo  
yomukazendu waNgura omutengavirongo oomuvena. Omurambawandjou  
mbu mwa yaruka okutja oomoKalkveld momaraka wOvirumbu.

We are giving our regard to the whole community of Otjikaoko  
that gathered here today; that came to our old homesteads; that are  
full in these mountains. All of us know that here where we are  
gathered today is the middle of this country. The middle of this  
country, and those who had colonised this country, who enriched  
themselves in this country also say here is at the crown of this  
country (the most beautiful and central area).

When we glance at the mountains that we are seeing there, it is in

the bull of Kakunde with ugly faces that was left in the sedge while others fled. Here is the man who is an Omukwatjivi (lineage) our father. Those who do not know him say he is Korukongo he is amidst yellowish dogs with black snouts. Others say he is Karieue. We ourselves say he is the father of Kazeireko of the ox of Mbinga of Muhere with removed foreteeth<sup>23</sup> as if there are cattle whose foreteeth are removed. It is said that he gave a cow and a calabash like lady Kandimba. There at their mountains.

.....

When you stand and go there at Okahurimehi. It is at the homestead of Mungunda of Kujambera of Ndjamo. At the cattle of Kati of Karorua the ox with only horns and no body (with large horns and a small body).

When you glance there at the back it is at Otukaru, at the black and white spotted cattle of the sacred calabash Kahengua it is on Karipose of Tjimanamuinjo.

When you return here it is at Okanjande, which you say is at the standing baboons with broken hair as if it sweeps, after which now cars are named after.

Here at Ombujongue here it is at the leopard of the black son of Muteta who was not walked after. He was like porcupines and ghosts with very small babies. It is in their old homestead here. They were not at other places. In the middle of the country here where they lived.

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<sup>23</sup>

In early times and still in some areas (especially in Kaokoland) a young person's lower four front teeth are removed as a mark of Herero identity. A certain ox was personified and praised in this way.

The son of Kaupangua the hunger of Kaoko when he came to live here he came to his fellow Ovatjimba who lived here.

When you come here at Erondu at the cattle of Mbuti of the beautiful, on which poison was spread where the daughter of Kozonene is. They dwelt here.

Here is at the yellowish flowers of omunditi shrubs for sheep; the white flowers of omukaravize shrubs for cattle; the house of the wife of Ngura the first explorer like a man. Here Omurambauandjou that you are now calling Kalkveld in the Whites' tongues.

In the above speech the speaker quotes praises of places and of some individuals who inhabited those places before colonisation. Kaura's speech reflects what Henrichsen (1998) describes in his article, because many places he praises are today commercial farms owned by the whites (cf. Henrichsen 1998). His article is briefly reviewed in chapter 8 of this thesis.

In the same way fiction such as folktales is also affected by the praising tradition. This is the subject of discussion in the next section.

#### **4.7 Praises within Folktales**

In Otjiherero folktales we find real and fictitious praises, which are discussed below in turn.

##### **(a) Fictitious praises**

Because of the fictitious nature of folktales, most praises which occur in them tend to be fictitious. The songs that largely occur in folktales resemble or imitate

praises.

The following example is extracted from a folktale in Dammann (1987: 90 - 92), which was narrated to him by Kristine Kapazu on 5.2.1954 in Omaruru. This folktale contains two praises, a fictitious and a real one. The real is quoted in the next sub-section. First a brief summary of the folktale.

Kunotjivi and Kapapi were young women with their babies on their backs. The people moved and were migrating to another place. They were walking behind the migrating group. En route they came across an *otjikumbamba* 'ogre'. The ogre was between them and the group. When they saw the ogre, they ran away and the ogre chased them. While it was chasing them the ogre sang and praised itself as follows:

*Porokototjo porokototjo*

Kutja ve tjo pove ndji ʔuna *hiya yo*

Oumbaumbona ongombe yaKatjinyo

Orukoze

Ke ri uru ko tji ma tupuka

*Porokototjo porokototjo*<sup>24</sup>

How do they say, do me a favour *hiya yo*

A little trouble of the cattle of Katjinyo

The white with blackish brown spots on the neck

He does not succeed in carrying himself when running

The real praise is quoted in the next sub-section.

#### (a) Real praises

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<sup>24</sup> These are sounds that resemble a rattling sound made by something giving out a succession of rapid hard sounds.

The young women succeeded in outrunning the ogre, but they threw their babies away because they were heavy to run with. They managed to catch up with the group. When they came closer to the group, the narrator revealed whose migratory journey it was through chanting a praise of the patrilineage of the leader. She praised the group as follows:

Orutjindo rwavo ndu aave teza, orwavo rwaihe

RwaHijakevau raNangari ekoto

Nda horeka ongombe orunde

Mama Tjiruuo tjaTjozonanga

Ngwaa ende ama ri ozoninga

Mondjira yorutjindo

E ri ngu rangera ozongombe

Zonganda yavo yaTjipapi tjaTjivare

Omuhona woNgavete yaHijamuvia

Ohoze yaMuheke

The migrating group which they were following, was of their father

Of Hijakevau of Nangari the deep [vessel]

That hid the cattle's collarbone [as meat]

Mother Tjiruuo of Tjozonanga

Who ate plum-like fruits

En route during their journey

while it is she who performs religious rites for the cattle

Of their homestead of Tjipapi of Tjivare

The chief of the Ngavete of Hijamuvia

The spy of Muheke

This praise is real because in Kaokoland the patrilineage to which Chief Kephas Muzuma belongs is still praised in this way. Chief Kephas Muzuma himself is normally referred to in short as the son of Hijavau.

#### 4.8 Praises within Modern Written Literature

A large number of praises are included in modern written poems, novels and dramas, and this section shows how this is done.

##### (a) Poetry

Many examples of such poems are found in collections of poetry; *Ozondambo zaTjipangandjara* 'The Tracks of Tjipangandjara'<sup>25</sup> by T. K. Kamupingene (1985) and *Oureka wEraka* 'Decoration of the Language'<sup>26</sup> by Mburo Mukonge (1997) and others.

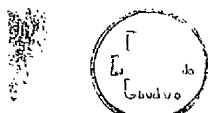
The following example is extracted from the poem entitled: 'Omuepiskopi Gotthardt' by E. Kangootui (See Ohly 1990: 35 - 41).

..... (lines omitted)  
Eyuva nda sekama  
Momukutu wetu waKahuiko  
Tja twar' Embo kOndjambo, kOndara  
Eyuva nda kumuka  
Momund' okazorundu wamukaza Hombo  
Tjimana wa ngu ri porui pombango  
A kayata motjimbuku tjozondu zaMujemua  
Kewe raKarukua  
Kekwamo raKapehuri  
Kewe retu ndi hungir' oongoma  
Na ndi pos' oohinini

---

<sup>25</sup> In our community the name Tjipangandjara is associated with the Otjiherero proverbs. Thus he was and is still known as the father (or philosopher) of Otjiherero proverbs.

<sup>26</sup> Poems (praises included) are considered to be fine pieces of art that decorate the language.



Ama hongorer' otupembo

.....

Murumendu wa ongisa tjike

Ngu mo yat' ozombaze

Zomuatje waKavirongo okeinya

Omunen' omukuryoma

Ngwa uhara pErindi-rombua

Ama ke nama kewa

.....

.....nu tji ma eta

Mongombe yaKambirong' ondjeo

Mondjuwo yaina yaKazombinde waMburu

Tjandje omayuva ya rongo

.....

Nu tji ma hitisa

Momutumb' ondundu

Mozongoro zaNgurii waKajaua

Ngu ya hungire erike

Ovandu ave tutu koutambo

Ooungerere, a pos' a tja:

"Muatj' omuzandu nyama yozonguvi

Ripangina matu perenge

Ovanazondera ngave yaruke

Matu twar' ozombangane!"

The day he left

Out of our valley of Kahuiko<sup>27</sup>

When he took the Book to Ondjambo, to Ondara

The day he moved out

Of the black man of the wife of Hombo

---

<sup>27</sup>

This is a praise of Windhoek.



The heap at the water-hole at the mountain pass<sup>28</sup>  
 He trudged over the common thorn tree of Mujemua's sheep  
At the stone of Karukua  
At the belt of Kapehuri  
At our stone that speaks like an organ  
That plays the flute<sup>29</sup>  
 While leading in striking lightning  
 .....  
 What's wrong with this man  
 who walks with strained loins  
 Like the son of Kavirongo with a feather  
the powerful giant  
Who spent the day at Erindi-rombua  
Cutting and being cut<sup>30</sup>  
 .....  
 ....., and when he brought [his group]  
In the ox of Kambirongo with spotted jaws  
In the house of the mother of Kazombinde of Mburu<sup>31</sup>  
 Many days have passed away  
 .....  
 When he led them  
Into the hilly land  
Into the zebras of Ngurii of Kajaua  
who spoke alone  
And people bowed their backs

---

<sup>28</sup> This is also a praise of Windhoek.

<sup>29</sup> This is a praise of Okahandja.

<sup>30</sup> This is a praise of a hero who was known as the son of Kavirongo who fought furiously at Erindi-rombua.

<sup>31</sup> This is a praise of Otjiwarongo.

Like millipedes<sup>32</sup>, he said:

“Young man rotting carcass for the vultures

Prepare yourself we are focussed on our destiny

The cowards must return

We are taking the heroes!”<sup>33</sup>

This poem is about a church minister who travelled around to preach the Christian Gospel. It was written by a fellow Omuherero church minister, Rev. Kanguotui. The person being praised here is Bishop Gotthardt “who was active in the conversion of Namibian communities to the Christian faith, composed on the occasion of his death” (Ohly 1990: 35).

The poet in this poem praises places through which Bishop Gotthardt travelled without mentioning the names of these places, a practice that is largely used in praises. See footnotes for the names of places through which the bishop travelled.

#### **(b) Prose**

Similarly, Hihanguapo's novels and dramas are full of praises. The following is from Hihanguapo's (1993:3) drama *O Pendura Ombwa Ndja Rara* 'Do not Waken a Sleeping Dog'. In the following extract Hivanga is speaking to his daughter Kahorongo.

Hivanga: Muatje wandje, me ripura kutja ngatu tjindire kotjirongo tjovanene vandje.

My child, I am considering moving to the place of my  
ancestors.

Kahorongo: Otjirongo tjovanene voye otjine Tate? Ami me yana, hi nokuvanga okutjinda motjirongo mu mwa tira mama.

---

<sup>32</sup> This is a praise of Grootfontein (Otjivanda).

<sup>33</sup> This reported speech is in imitation of a war song.

Which place is of your ancestors Father? I truly do not want to leave this place in which my mother died.

Hivanga: Ai! Otjirongo hi tja kururuka, me vanga kutja tu yende ketupa rondu otjitote moyaNakaombo, movanatje vainyanguTjorui ovawa vozondomboise mba ire kozondana. Metundu romuhona Mureti waKaupangua.

Ai! This place is overgrazed, I want us to move to the bone of a sheep the remover in the place of Nakaombo, in the children of my father's younger brother Tjorui the beautiful with rough and tumble hair who went to the calves. In the old homestead of Chief Mureti of Kaupangua.

The underlined section is the actual praise of a place called Ongango in Kaokoland, but the author uses it to refer to a fictitious place.

In the same drama (Hihanguapo 1993: 2) the introduction of the characters Katjoko Tjeparu and Komusara is followed by the praise of the place of his birth. The introduction of the character Tjituezu Tinda is followed by the praise of his matrilineage.

Thus modern literature or modern writings are full of praises. Modern instrumental music is not free of the influence of praises, as in oral songs praises are included in it. This is the topic of the next section.

#### **4.9 Praises within Modern Songs**

Praising is the most powerful means of influence that affects most, if not all, practices (be they old or new) in our community. Thus when the new western practices or traditions enter our culture they are not left unaffected, therefore some modern music and hymns contain praises.

**(a) Modern Songs with Instrumental Accompaniment**

This section discusses the incorporation of praises in the music of modern musicians such as Jackson Kaujeua who uses the guitar. The example below is an extract from Jackson Kaujeua's song: 'My Country'. He sang this song for the first time when he was in exile, longing for home and for Namibia to become independent.

Tjirongo tjetu  
Nominyo vyetu  
Twa karera ove  
Mokuti ongaango  
Amatu kondjere oovee  
Amatu tire oovee  
Ombindu yetu mai uru kove  
Tjet' oveni *oovee* mama *wee*  
Tjet' oveni *yee*  
Tjet' oveni (x3)  
*Aa* Namibia  
Tjet' oveni (x2)  
Otjirongo otjet' oveni ho  
Tji wa utire kovina vyamukaa Ngombe  
Yongombe yaKapeko kokure  
KoKeetmanshoop ookovina vyamukaa Ngombe  
Yongombe yaKapeko omure aha turura  
Okasupi a turura  
Kokure kovasuko vaNangaro  
Tji we ya mbo mo ya mOtjomuise  
Mu Haurondanga yamukaa Komauua  
Kongoro nomundu  
Ookomiti omire komasuviro

Tji wa zu mbo mo ya mOkahandja

Kewe raKarukua ndi posa

Aayo ri nomundu moukoto

ketundu rahi yaKeja

Kekunde raTjambi

*Oowee oowee*

Tjet' oveni mama *wee*

Tjet' oveni (x3)

Our country and our lives

We are staying on your behalf

In the desert [exile]

While struggling for you

While dying for you

Our blood is calling you

Our own *oowee* mother *wee*

Our own *yee*

Our own (x3)

*Aa* Namibia

Our own (x2)

That country is our own

When you start at the things of the wife of Ngombe

Of the cattle of Kapeko very far

It is Keetmanshoop that's at the things of Ngombe

Of the cattle of Kapeko which the tall one failed to take off

And which the short one took off

After that you will come in Otjomuise<sup>34</sup>

In Haurondanga of the wife of Komauua

At the horse and a rider

It's at the tall tree for rest

---

<sup>34</sup> Otjomuise is the Otjiherero name for Windhoek.

After that you will come to Okahandja<sup>35</sup>

At the stone of Karukua which sounds

As if it has somebody inside

At the abandoned homestead of the father of Keja

At the bean [coloured cow] of Tjambi

*Oowee oowee*

Our own mother *wee*

Our own (x3)

The code switching from singing to praising is smoothly and skilfully done. The praises are chanted while the other parts are sung.

#### **(b) Hymns**

As in all other genres, the composition of hymns does not exclude praises. Thus religious singing is also affected by the praise tradition, as exemplified in this subsection.

Hymns are songs which are sung according to the Western tunes. The missionaries taught the Ovaherero these successions of rhythmically ordered tones when they were taught to sing in churches and at other religious occasions.

After they mastered the different melodies they started to create their own songs besides those in the hymn book. As usual, the new creations were spiced with praises, for instance:

Kehi rOvambo okokure

Kaku nandundu na muno

Kwa ir' aṅi (x3)

Kwa ir' aṅi koyaTjombe

---

<sup>35</sup> The praise of Okahandja is analysed in detailed in chapter 10, section 10.2.

Kwa ir' ani.

KoyaTjombe, Tjombe tjaNgandu (x3)

The land of Ovambo is far

It doesn't have a mountain like here

Who went there (x3)

Who went there, to hers of Tjombe

Who went there

To hers of Tjombe, Tjombe of Ngandu (x3)

While the whole group is singing the chorus part (indented part), one of them is inserting the praise; i.e. underlined pieces, here a phrase that is praising a former king of Ovamboland.

#### **4.10 Concluding Remarks**

The preceding discussion demonstrates the fusion of praises into different genres. It also shows clearly that praises are elegant circumlocutions. See section 11.1.11 for periphrastic description.

One may wonder whether everything is praised in the Ovaherero community. The answer is yes and no. Yes, because a well equipped oral poet may use the acquired patterns of already existing praises to create praises for those topics or referents that are/were not praised yet. Or he may conjoin already existing praises with a varying degree of amendment and adaptation or adjustment into new ones. This seems possible only when the basic structure of oral poetic 'grammar' is acquired, assimilated and mastered to a certain creative and innovative degree. Normally, however, lineages, human beings, places and animals are praised. They are the basic sources from which praises in different discourses are adopted and adapted. Therefore an Omuhherero digs deep into the sources of praises to get fragments of praises to flavour his discourse. These sources are not peculiar to oral poets but open to any one, and the amount of fragments dug differs from person to person

depending on the capability of an individual.



## 5. Sources of Praises

“Although a word may have multiple meanings, its use in an appropriate context will rarely bring to mind any meaning but the relevant one.”

(McKeown 1985:55)

A general discussion of the sources of praises in this chapter places them within a broader cultural context which enhances optimal comprehension of praises. A praise within an appropriate context diverts the listener to one (or more than one) implication among many, as taken in consideration during the analysis of praise texts in chapter 10. With a broader cultural background, the tasks of analysing, evaluating and interpreting praises become much easier. The analyses of selected praises are presented in chapter 10 where a sample text is taken from each type of source.

The images in praises are largely drawn from the culture-specific knowledge and experiences in daily life. Daily life includes the past and present experience, and continues into the future. Barber (1991:4) nicely summarises this as "the past is encapsulated and brought into the present, where it exercises a continual pull". From the same perspective, Chesaina (1994:85) defines oral literature as

"the heart of a people's life: it is the very soul of their culture. As the reservoir of a people's values, it expresses a given society's world view and gives them a spring-board from which their day-to-day existence is propelled".

In Otjiherero we praise lineages, persons, places, animals and almost anything which catches our attention in its culture-specific contexts. Their discussion in order to prepare the ground for the analysis in chapter 10 is essential. The next sections briefly say something about each in turn.

## 5.1 Lineages

Schapera (1945), Viveló (1977), Kuvare (1977), Malan (1980) and Estermann (1981) undertook detailed studies of Ovaherero lineages.

Our community is characterized by its double unilineal descent system which structures its members into *oruzo* 'patrilineage' and *eanda* 'matrilineage'. Each Omuhherero is socially attached to a matrilineage and to a patrilineage simultaneously. People are patri- or matrilineally related if they are descendants of a common ancestor or ancestress respectively, sometimes an ancient one who may be mythological.

The Ovaherero are patrilocal. This means that most people who stay together in one *onganda* 'homestead' are patrilineally related. Each homestead has an *okuruwo*<sup>36</sup> 'sacred shrine' between the *ondjuwo onene* 'main hut' or literally 'big hut' and the kraal or cattle enclosure with *omuini wonganda* 'priest' or literally 'owner of homestead' at the head of that particular homestead. He performs all social and religious rituals and ceremonies. If a sacred shrine is absent, then such a homestead is regarded as an *ohambo* 'cattle post' or 'sub-homestead' of a main homestead with a sacred shrine.

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<sup>36</sup> The concept *okuruwo*, although glossed by most scholars as 'holy fire', 'sacred fire', 'fire', 'sacred hearth' (see Irle, 1906; Luttig, 1933; Kuvare 1977; Malan 1980; Crandall 1996, Gibson 1956, Viveló 1977), was in the distant past a typical sacred hut (or house). Vedder (1928:166) refers to *okuruwo* as "the altars of the holy fire". This becomes clearer when one linguistically compares it with related words such as *okaruwo* 'toilet' or 'small house', *otjiruwo* 'nest' and *ondjuwo* 'hut' or 'house'. The morphological structure *ondjuwo* (hut or house) is *o(N)+ruwo > \*onduwo*, but an 'intrusive' [j] slipped in and resulted in *ondjuwo* instead of *\*onduwo*. From a linguistic perspective, it is obvious that all these words share the same nominal stem, *-ruwo*, and consequently share the same basic meaning, 'house'. Although the fire that burns on the hearth in the centre of the *okuruwo* is one of the important parts of the *okuruwo* as a complex structure, it is inaccurate to refer to the whole structure as fire or hearth. I hope a concept which conveys the meaning of *okuruwo*, as viewed by Ovaherero themselves, is the sacred shrine because it is comparable to a church in Western cultures.

All sacred properties such as sacred cattle and their calabashes, *ozondume* 'sacred fire making sticks' and *otjiya* 'a sacred slab' (a piece of wood upon which fire sticks are whirled) are associated with the sacred shrine and regarded as patrilineal religious properties. In the case of the death of a priest, sacred cattle are inherited by his patri-related successor who succeeds him to this socio-religious position. The *ozondume* 'whirl sticks' and *otjiya* 'the slab' are destroyed or thrown away, and the *okuruwo* 'sacred shrine' is discarded and started anew - a new priest with a new *okuruwo* 'sacred shrine', new *ozondume* 'whirl fire sticks', new *otjiya* 'sacred slab' and new fire.

Among the Ovaherero we distinguish the following patrilineages<sup>37</sup>: Ongweyuva 'sun'<sup>38</sup>, Ondanga 'a cattle with white spot on its fore head', Ongwatjiya 'sacred slab', Ongwendjandje 'generous person', Ohorongo 'kudu', Ombongora 'a cattle with spotted neck', Omuhinaruzo 'without patrilineage', Ohambanderwa 'non-bleating', Omurekwa 'choked person', Omakoti 'pods of mopane tree' and Omangarangwa 'homestead on a plain'. The Ohorongo 'kudu' patrilineage is believed to be the first from which all the others were derived. For a detailed list of patrilineages see Viveló (1977:212-5) and Gibson (1956:109-39).

Each patrilineage serves as a common source from which its sublineages sprang. The patri-sublineages are known as *ozonganda* 'homesteads', and each has its praise. Some sublineages which were derived from one patrilineage share some common parts in their praises.

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<sup>37</sup> When the *e-* class prefix is attached to the root/stem, for instance -kwatjivi, then the resulting word, Ekwatjivi, stands for a matrilineage and used as an adjective. When the *omu-* or *ova-* class prefix is prefixed to the root, then that word (e.g. Omukwatjivi or Ovakwatjivi) refers to the member or members of that matrilineage respectively. When only *mu-* is attached, it becomes a proper noun and refers to the founder ancestress of that matrilineage.

<sup>38</sup> Although some patrilineages and matrilineages, such as Ongweyuva and Omukweyuva (both mean 'sun') and Ongwendjande and Omukwendjandje (both mean 'a generous person' share their basic meaning, I doubt that there is any obvious connection. Presumably, it is a coincidence.

The matrilineal descent system is known as *eanda* 'matrilineage'. People are matrilineally related when their mothers originated from a common ancestress. Their kinship comes into practice in social proceedings such as inheritance, *ehetu*<sup>39</sup> 'report after funeral' and *ozombakura*<sup>40</sup> 'special meat during wedding ceremonies'.

Among the Ovaherero the following seven matrilineages exist: Ovakweyuva 'sun', Ovakwatjivi 'bad luck person', Ovakwendjandje 'generous person', Ovakwaui 'stick', Ovakwendata 'mud', Ovakwenambura 'rain' and Ovakwenatja 'poor person' or 'don't care person'. For the descriptions of the origins of the matrilineages see Estermann (1981:83-6), although some descriptions are not accurate. Vivel (1977:216) lists nine matrilineages. He lists Omukwauti and Omukwatjiti as well as Omukwendjandje and Omukwahere as different matrilineages respectively.

According to oral accounts Mukuejuva, the first ancestress from which the Ekweyuva matrilineage was derived, was the first common ancestress. First the common ancestress of Ekwendata and Ekwendjandje matrilineages broke away from the Ekweyuva matrilineage. Afterwards the other matrilineages broke away one by one from the Ekweyuva matrilineage. Therefore we find two groups of matrilineages. The Ekwendata and Ekwendjandje group on the one hand and all the other matrilineages form another group on the other.

Within each group we find *ongura* 'customary social mockery' or 'joke'. We have two types of social mockeries based on these groups: the food and the death

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<sup>39</sup> After the funeral the matrilineal relatives of the father of the deceased (in case when the deceased is a man or unmarried woman) or the matrilineal relatives of the husband of the deceased go to the matrilineal relatives of the deceased, and they officially report his/her death to them.

<sup>40</sup> The father (or his patrilineal relatives) of the bride gives the meat of the ox of the bridegroom to the matrilineal relatives of the bride as an *ombakura* lit. 'gift'. In so doing the matrilineal relatives accept the responsibility as official witnesses of the marriage, and also as an admission that they too approved the marriage.

mockery. The death mockery is 'played' by the members of each matrilineage against the members of the other matrilineage within each group: it is a group infighting practice. The most popular topic of the mockery is witchcraft or bewitching. During this mockery the members of one matrilineage accuse and counter-accuse the members of the other matrilineage of bewitching or killing for no reason the members of their own matrilineage.

The food mockery is 'played' by the offspring fathered by the members of each matrilineage against the children fathered by the members of the other matrilineage within that group. The offspring fathered by Ovakwatjivi<sup>41</sup>, Ovakwenambura, Ovakwauti and Ovakwenatja are united in one group that faces the offspring of Ovakweyuva. Mr Kaputu (one of my informants) refers to this group jokingly as the 'United Nations'. His father is an Omukweyuva, thus he is verbally attacked and/or counter-attacked by members of the group of united lineages. The popular topic of this social mockery is accusations and counter-accusations about gnawing greed. In other words each group accuses and counter-accuses the other of excessive desires for food, saying because of this covetousness, food sticks in their throats when being swallowed.

Each of these matrilineages has matri-sublineages. These matri-sublineages are known or referred to as *ozondjuwo* 'houses'. Each matrilineage or sublineage is praised. The praise of Ovakwatjivi, as a sample, is analysed in chapter 10, section 10.4.

Both men and women are born to their father's patrilineage and into their mother's matrilineage. They do not bear these lineages only, but the praises of these lineages are transferred to them too. Thus by birth, they acquire their mother's matrilineage, their father's patrilineages and their paternal grandfather's matrilineages, and their praises. These praises are their basic praises, but

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<sup>41</sup> According to Kuvare (1977:207) these four matrilineages originated from a common ancestress. The name of this common ancestress is unknown.

outstanding chiefs, heroes and outstanding characters acquire many more additions to their basic ones. Personal praises are discussed in the next section.

## **5.2 Personal Praises**

“It was the possession of cattle which alone ensured their possessor respect, power, and influence in the community.”  
(Vedder 1938:43)

This section discusses the way in which individuals acquire praise, and how some acquire more additions to their basic personal praises than others, especially chiefs and heroes. Ovaherero acquire their praises through heroism, inheritance and the origin of their personal names as discussed below.

### **5.2.1 Heroism**

Heroism associated with physical bravery was a very much needed weapon in the survival of the community, and it was very important in those days.

Chieftainship or royal houses and associated heroism among the Ovaherero are linked to bravery, the accumulation of wealth in terms of a huge herd of cattle, a large number of followers and the capability of maintaining power over subordinates through acquired wealth. The responsibility for administration of the sacred ‘office’ (sacred shrine) contributed significantly to a rise in esteem, for the priest (traditional religious figure) was regarded as a man of consequence. He is the one who performs religious and social rituals and ceremonies and who tastes the milk and meat of sacred cattle. Almost everything in the particular homestead is focussed upon him. Accumulation of these traits in one person contributed to the highest esteem. For this reason a man of high esteem does not escape praising.

Wealth usually attracted a large number of subjects to the particular homestead. Generosity also counted to the advantage of the particular chief or hero and a

chief should have the spirit of giving freely. The capability to provide for and entertain the attracted subjects with lavish feasting ensured to a certain extent loyalty, support and protection in raids and plundering. These subjects submitted themselves to the control of chiefs and became herdsmen and 'slaves'. They did hard work for a subsistence wage, mainly to be kept in food. A homestead with a large number of subjects and young men (especially sons of the chief) gave potential raiders, intruders and rustlers pause for thought.

A chief, as a brave regal person who acquired his wealth through bravery, should be capable of defending his acquired wealth, otherwise loss of wealth would follow. For this reason a chief married many wives in order to bear many sons as soon as possible. Thus the proverb meaning to be fulfilled: 'Sons are born to a homestead, but they are not bought to it.'<sup>42</sup> This proverb means that when dangerous raids occurred the subjects and slaves would easily take to their heels, but the sons will be anxious and keen to fight and defend their properties. It is in these circumstances the brave warriors, heroes and chiefs acquire additional pieces to their basic praises. These additions are added life long, as an individual becomes involved in other praiseworthy incidents.

In the wealthy class we find those people who were called *ovahona* (plural). In Otjiherero the term *omuhona* (singular) has a double meaning: rich person and chief. Thus in our culture the concepts wealthy person and chief may be viewed as synonymous - especially in the olden times where wealth was closely associated with chieftaincy. The poorer members of the community accepted well-to-do members as their chiefs, this practice intertwined the meanings of wealth and chief. If wealth was lost the subordinates moved to another chief who would be able to keep them in food. Once again the proverb quoted above is fulfilled here.

Vedder (1938:201) describes this situation as follows:

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<sup>42</sup>

Proverb: I kwaterwa kai randerwa.

Literal translation: They are born to it, not bought.

"The Herero says, 'Two things make a chief; a large number of cattle and a numerous following. A man who has many cattle, but few followers, is not a chief at all, and the man who has a large following, but no stock cannot maintain his followers and they leave him.' Another Herero proverb runs: 'Employ people for your undertakings, for you will never achieve anything with cattle alone'<sup>43</sup>."

A chief has to gather as many people around him as he can in order to be able to protect his property, since property will not protect itself. Because of these, chieftainships or royal houses came into existence, and the following became the best known royal houses:

- Tjamuaha/Maharero Royal House
- Zeraua Royal House
- Kambazembi Royal House
- Mureti Royal House
- Thom Royal House
- Nguvauva Royal House

Chief Maharero's praise is analysed, as a sample, in chapter 10, section 10.3. Thus a brief introduction of Maharero and his reign is discussed here. Maharero succeeded his father, Tjamuaha, as a chief of the Tjamuaha/Maharero royal house. The meaning of Maharero's name creates a dilemma. According to Kaputu (1992c:73-4) the name Maharero came about as follows:

"When the land [country] was under Herero rule, he [Tjamuaha] undertook a journey to Otjikune where Viongara of Tjiveze lived. Viongara was related to Tjamuaha but he was older than he. When Tjamuaha came there, he gathered people to tell him the whereabouts of Viongara, but Viongara was outside lying in the ash, as he was very old and his whole body was full of sores. When Tjamuaha saw him, he wept and said: 'This was the land which was inhabited by us, but now Viongara looks like this.' When he returned, Maharero was born and Tjamuaha named him 'Days of Viongara'. 'The age of Viongara made me name this child; he is Maharero, meaning the lands of Hereros.' The name Maharero came about in that way."

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<sup>43</sup> Proverb: Tumba ovandu, o tumbu ozongombe, ozongombe otjinavandu matji ku yeka. Literal translation: Breed people, do not breed cattle, a people-have [one who has many followers] will deprive you of cattle.



In contrast Ovambanderu<sup>44</sup> informants of Sundermeier (1986:10) suggested that the name Maharero was given "because he was always in the company of Nama chief Jonker Afrikaner". His informant Tjatindi claimed that the name means "*mahi omarero*" expressing a desire for the happier past.

In accordance with our customs a name is given to a child within a range of two to four weeks after his/her birth. When Jonker Afrikaner in 1840 appeared on the scene Maharero was already a young man. The commonality in both arguments is the expression of desire for the happier past, that is Tjamuaha's desire for the happier past with Viongara at Otjikunde, and his desire for the happier past before the despotism of Jonker Afrikaner.

Thus, Maharero (*omahi omarero ngaaye ruku Tjamuaha* = 'lands of yesterday as Tjamuaha named') simply means 'happier past'.

A controversy also occurs about his place of birth. Vedder (1938:174) states that Maharero was born in 1820 at Otjikunde. On the other hand Kaputu, as quoted above, is of the opinion that he was born at Okahandja. Tjamuaha went from Okahandja to Otjikunde to visit Viongara and when he went back he gave his son a name as explained above. His actual place of birth remains under speculation.

When Jonker Afrikaner appeared on the scene from Cape Town, he came with guns which were unknown to other ethnic groups in Namibia (former South West Africa). The power of the gun made him a leader who ruled with a stern hand. Under the despotism of Jonker Afrikaner, the wealthy Ovaherero chiefs, Kahitjene

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In this thesis the concept Ovaherero (or Otjiherero) is used as an umbrella comprises the Kaokoland (Ovaimba, Ovatjimba and Ovandamuranda), Central Ovaherero and Ovambanderu. Estermann (1981) and Mans (1998) consider Ovazemba, Ovakuvala, Ovatwa, Ovangumbi, Ovangambwe (Nyaneka) and other similar ethnic groups in Southern Angola to be sub ethnic groups of Ovaherero. On the basis of linguistic evidence I consider them to speak distinct, but closely related, languages to Otjiherero. See Kavari (1991).

and Tjamuaha (Maharero's father) moved to Windhoek and became his vassals. Because of their submission, Tjamuaha's courageous sons were incorporated into Jonker Afrikaner's regiment and Maharero was made the leader of the Ovaherero military section. Soon he became a responsible headman. This brought him into disfavour with Jonker Afrikaner.

As Pool (1991:14) puts it:

"Maharero himself was often in disfavour with Jonker mainly because the Oorlam leader could not stand the fact that the young Herero time and again showed himself to be superior to Jonker's sons as far as bravery was concerned."

Thus Maharero's attitude led to his 'imprisonment' on the wheel of a ox wagon. Jonker Afrikaner called him "Tjamuaha's calf". As leader of a section he learned how to handle fire-arms and led raid expeditions.

Maharero grew up under the despotism of Jonker Afrikaner and his tyranny hardened him morally and physically instead of weakening him. He became a prominent figure in Jonker's regiment. He and his followers killed a lion which made the Afrikaners take to their heels. He also led successful raiding expeditions on behalf of Jonker Afrikaner, and became a thorn in his side.

Maharero became tired of his "imprisonment" and he left Jonker Afrikaner and went to his brother<sup>45</sup> Chief Zeraua at Otjimbingwe.

After Kahitjène's death Zeraua sent Maharero back from Otjimbingwe to Windhoek to take up Kahitjène's chieftainship over his leaderless followers in 1851. Now Jonker called him 'Jonker's dog' and 'Tjamuaha's unruly calf', but he submitted himself again under Jonker's control.

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<sup>45</sup> The term *erumbi* means elder brother or elder sister. In this case it means that Maharero's mother and Zeraua's were sisters, thus they were brothers. But Vedder (1938:218) states that Zeraua was Maharero's uncle, which is wrong.

After Tjamuaha's death in 1861, he succeeded his father as chief and priest. In other words he inherited both secular and sacred offices. Before his death, Tjamuaha blessed his son as Vedder (1938:278) describes it:

"Maharero bent down before his father, and the latter took both his hands between his and stroked them several times, backwards and forwards, as if he was giving him something, and said, 'Take it, take it! Keep our people together! Be faithful to the service of the sacred fire of your ancestors!' He then spat into Maharero's open mouth and repeated the words, 'Take it, take it!' By doing this he transferred to Maharero at one and the same time his religious powers, his priesthood, and his office as chief."

Maharero became paramount chief in 1863. Vedder (1938:339-40) describes his election to paramouncy as follows:

"It was arranged that a chief should be elected, and Zeraua, who was the oldest chief, was chosen as paramount chief. This was quite a good choice, for Zeraua had much more energy than Maharero. But Zeraua refused and proposed Maharero. Nobody felt very sympathetic towards Maharero, for it was well known that he and his men had not been responsible for the victory of the battle of the 15th June [1863], but that the Hereros belonging to the mine were the real victors. It was well known, too, that Maharero was avaricious - a characteristic which is not to be admired in a chief; it was noticed as well that Maharero was enervated through having many wives. This very circumstance, however, that he had so many wives connected him with all the Hereros of importance, wherever they might be. Maharero was chosen as paramount chief, and the people pledged themselves to obey him."

With the assistance of Andersson, Green and Zeraua, Maharero as paramount chief succeeded in uniting the Ovaherero in a well organized regiment which threw off the yoke of the Afrikaners and which gave the Ovaherero a breathing space. He died in 1890 and was succeeded by his son, Samuel Maharero who led the Ovaherero against the Germans in 1904.

A brave, clever, courageous and splendid warrior, he was praised in relation to all his characteristics. A sample analysis from this source is of Maharero's praise in chapter 10, section 10.3.

It is interesting to note here that because women are not directly associated with

wars, raids and conflicts, they acquire additional praises through their husbands or parents. For instance phrases such as 'wife of ...', 'child of ...', 'child of the wife of ...' etc are followed by a praise of her husband, father and mother respectively. This does not exclude women from acquiring heroic praises when they are brave enough to be involved in exceptional encounters.

### **5.2.2 Inheritance and the Origin of Names**

Besides heroism, Ovaherero acquire praises by inheritance and by the origins of their names. Ovaherero acquire praises by inheritance immediately after one's birth, because they are born to their patrilineages and matrilineages. They obviously acquire the praise of their mothers' matrilineages (which is their own matrilineages), the praise of their fathers' patrilineages (which becomes their own patrilineages) and the praise of their paternal grandfathers' matrilineages (as their basic praises).

In Ovaherero culture a person equals his name which equals its origin, on the other hand. Most names are closely associated with or adopt praises of their origins. In this way the origin of the name and its carrier would share a praise. Therefore the praises of some individuals include praises of the origins of their names. Thus one's name, its origin and one's praise become one's identity. For this we find part(s) of the origin of one's praise included in his/her praise as part of one's description.

### **5.3 Places**

Human beings are born into, act, live in, prosper in, die, are buried in and are attached to their territorial space. They occupy, tame and explore the territory in which they find themselves and make it their temporary or permanent home. Within this territory they come into conflict and contact with others, some places are much better than others and others worse, some liked and other disliked for a

variety of reasons. Some places are bad because of livestock diseases while others are free of them. In some places livestock increases rapidly, and some places became memorable because of certain incidents. These incidents become closely associated with the specific locations which can become historic monuments. For all these reasons, Ovaherero create praises at least for every place they lived and herded their livestock in. This is how praises of places came or come into existence, the new places acquire praises and the old ones acquire additions. A place acquires its name and praise because of a memorable incident or event or because of its physical characteristics such as well shaped mountains or a particularly characteristic layout.

The most important features in praises of places are:

- natural or physical features of a place;
- people who inhabited the particular place;
- remarkable events which took place there;
- people who were born or buried there;
- the oxen whose horns are/were placed on a grave in a particular place, specifically on the first grave in that place.

The praise of Okahandja is analysed in chapter 10, section 10.2.

## **5.4 Animals**

Within their territorial space people come into contact with animals in their natural habitats. As hunters they kill some and taste their meat, and make distinctions between the meat of different animals. They give names and praises to animals in accordance with their physical appearances, observed behavioural characteristics and other traits. In these ways animals have acquired praises. The praise of a rhinoceros is analysed in chapter 10, section 10.1 as an example.

## 5.5 New Creations

When praises from other sources and the structure of the oral poetic grammar are mastered in a creative and innovative manner, the oral poets become competent creators of new praises, or new additions to existing ones.

The mastery of the basic structure enables them to create original praises. Thus my two main informants, Rev. E. Tutjavi and Mr J. A. Kaputu, each created a new praise for himself and for the Otjiherero radio service respectively. They are the first oral poets to praise these. Therefore a fifth category of praise has been created to accommodate these newly created praises. The praise of the Otjiherero radio service is analysed in chapter 10, section 10.5.

So far we have been discussing the products of oral poets, but we have said little about the poets themselves. Discussion of the oral poet and his art is presented in the next chapter.

## 6. The Oral Poet and his Art

This chapter explains how praises are acquired by and the literary competence of the Ovaherero oral poets.

### 6.1 Acquisition of Praises

"The acquisition of verbal habits represents a process of incremental growth."  
(Postman and Keppel 1969:15)

In Otjiherero an oral poet memorizes nothing, but continuous gradual exposure to oral tradition from childhood to old age reinforces the acquisition of the structure of the oral poetic grammar. An oral poet, as Scheub (1975:23) rightly remarks, "never attempts to 'commit anything' to memory", but witnesses many actual performances and acquires first hand knowledge and experience. Thus acquisition is incidental, incremental and spontaneous through gradual exposure to the art and tradition of praising. According to Scheub (1975:18) acquisition of praises is a "continuing assimilation of what has been observed" over years. Therefore, as Ong (1982:9) puts it, "human beings in primary oral cultures, those untouched by writing in any form, learn a great deal and possess and practice great wisdom, but they do not 'study'". Similarly Postman and Keppel (1969:36) observe that this incidental acquisition "occurs in the absence of instructions and presumably without intent".

Similar to what Scheub (1975:17) observes about the Xhosa folktales, praises are

"ancient and deeply rooted in tradition, [and] are learned in no apparently formal or purposeful way. No special effort seems to be made to pass on the techniques and core-images from one generation to the next; they are however indeed transmitted, but in a seemingly informal fashion".

An acquisitive young oral poet is exposed to this oral tradition of praising from "the earliest life of childhood where language has its deepest psychic roots" (Ong

1982:113). Lord (1960:36) summarises the acquisition process that

"the learning of an oral poetic language follows the same principles as the learning of language itself, not by the conscious schematization of elementary grammars but by the natural oral method".

Thus to learn the grammar of praises, as Culler (1975:8) observes, "is not to memorize a set of utterances; it is to master a system of rules and norms which make it possible to produce and understand utterances". Children are born with an innate ability to learn the rules of the language spontaneously and unconsciously. The art of praising, as Lord (1960:32) puts it, is "around him from birth, the technique of it is the possession of his elders, and he falls heir to it". Presumably in a similar way the oral poets acquire the rules of the oral poetic grammar of praises. The acquisition of the grammar system means to assimilate its rules and norms to a degree of a native speaker's competence through hearing, gradual exposure and habitual usage.

According to Lord (1960:36) when a person speaks his native language he does not repeat words and phrases that he learned consciously, but the words, phrases, sentences and rules emerge from his habitual usage. In this way the potential young oral poet becomes aware of and understands the ways in which information is distributed, and develops a taste for it. He realizes that the oral poetic grammar of praises is often not the same as the grammar of everyday speech. He absorbs and assimilates a sense of new arrangements of ideas and the linguistic patterns that express them, and his instinctive grasp of the distribution of information is sharpened. An oral poet never stops in the process of accumulating, recombining and remodelling his ideas and mental pictures, and this perfects his performances and enriches his art. The structure, rules and norms of the oral poetic grammar of praises is further discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.

This acquisition process is applicable to all members of the community. Those who are not active oral poets possess latent knowledge of the grammar system of praises which enable them to understand and decode it. Some members possess



abeyant knowledge that could be revived, but they are shy to perform in public or to act as competent informants.

## 6.2 Literary Competence

“Recalling images makes it possible to visualize one image in conjunction with others.”

(Scheub 1975:95)

Otjiherero praises are characterised by speedy delivery where pieces of information flow into one another without pauses between them. When one watches an oral poet chant a praise, it is as if a praise passes unnoticed through his lips without thinking. It seems as if the oral poet stands aside and lets a stream of consciousness emerge with astonishing powers of association, with great fluency reflecting a free flow of thought. The reason for this spontaneous flow of information is that an oral poet, as Scheub (1975:3) nicely summarises the situation of the Xhosa folktales, "dips into her rich repertory of ... images, and brings into performance appropriate images and image-segments which combine to create the finished work", because he has acquired a native competence of the essential traditional 'tools'. Most of the experiences are 'planted' into the mind unwittingly. Talented and/or experienced oral poets remember and recall them spontaneously without conscious attempts at remembering them. In performances an oral poet introduces details and sequences of which he may or may not have experience from previous performances, but which are relevant to the image he is currently describing in praise of the referent. These details and sequences may come from images entirely different from the one he is evoking, especially when they are potentially useful or relevant.

During delivery or transmission a core-image can be skeletally presented or developed, expanded, detailed or even dramatized. If the oral poet transmits bare core-images only, the product of his praising becomes too skeletal. In expansion of core-images an oral poet uses enriching images. When a core-image is

delivered, it calls up relevant details that are used to support, expand, detail, develop or dramatize it. Therefore, as Scheub (1975:142) remarks, "an especially competent artist has little difficulty, while performing, introducing details which give added colour, depth, and realism to her character and their actions". The use of details often depends on which aspect of the performance or which trait of referent the oral poet desires to emphasize or describe in detail. In praises, images are often not fully described in a way which would facilitate the understanding of praises by newcomers or outsiders, and their rapid delivery also complicates comprehension. This is because the audience (of native speakers) is itself so knowledgeable of its artistic tradition, that the oral poet is able to move rapidly, and to take much for granted. The use of recursive expansion and imagery in praises is further discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.2 and 11.1.8 respectively.

The oral poet exploits and manipulates the poetic qualities of the language as well as manipulating the facts, as he converts or translates mental pictures into utterances. He chooses words, phrases, clauses and/or sentences which appropriately describe the referent, and that express images adequately. He does this skilfully because he has acquired the unique oral poetic grammar of praises in general. Thus, oral poets acquire and use a flexible and dynamic poetic grammar that has been generated over years by earlier oral poets using the old sets of expressions which they have preserved and reworked for the purpose of further praising in an indefinite future, "after being shaped and reshaped centuries earlier", as Ong (1982:23) puts it. This process continues as long as the oral tradition in general and the art of praising in particular are still in practice.

As the oral poet becomes a native speaker of both ordinary grammar of Otjiherero and the oral poetic grammar of Otjiherero praises, code-switching between them becomes a normal practice. He switches these grammars systematically, skilfully and appropriately as purpose, feeling and context allow. Because of the omnipresent nature of praises in many other discourses and genres, as explained under 'spice' above, code-switching is inevitable.

To summarise this section, similarly to what Tedlock (1987:172) points out concerning the ancient texts of the Quiché Maya, the Native Americans of Guatemala, Otjiherero praises may be described as “works of art that are shaped by specialized performance skills and filled with specialized knowledge of the world experience” where the competencies of the oral poet go beyond those of an ordinary native speaker of Otjiherero.

## 7. Data

The corpus of this study is drawn from published and unpublished written sources as well as materials collected during my fieldwork between June 1998 and December 1998. The written sources are Ohly (1990), Kamupingene (1985) and Heywood (1992). The majority of texts used are from fieldwork data and from Ohly (1990). During my fieldwork I consulted and interviewed those who are rightly regarded as experts in our folklore. As far as these people are concerned, Heywood (1990: iii-iv) remarks that the

"whole world of meaning, learning and knowledge . . . are stored in the human memory and are orally transmitted in active social contexts. This hidden 'other' science and poetry is easily marginalised by dominant discourse during the process of modernisation. Its carriers . . . have neither degrees nor diplomas; their expertise cannot be evaluated by flicking through typed lists of publications and qualifications: it can only be experienced. This knowledge and wisdom is silent and inaccessible until a social occasion calls for its performance in action. . . . This oral knowledge . . . exists not in abstraction but to activate cultural functions which embody the historical experience of a language community, and remind it of the meaning which it has to the world of material phenomena, and which it lives to express."

Some texts from the written sources are slightly edited, lines in particular are laid out differently and some re-translated. The orthography that is used in this study is the modern Otjiherero standard orthography in accordance with the Herero Orthography No. 3 (1983), as far as orthographic symbols, disjunctive and conjunctive writing are concerned.

## 8. Review of Relevant Literature

This chapter reviews the works on Otjiherero oral poetry. Studies have been made about oral poetry, specifically praises, in different African communities such as *oriki* in Yoruba (Barber 1991), *mabókó* in Tswana (Schapera 1965), *izibongo* in Zulu (Gunner 1984) and Xhosa (Opland 1983), *dithoko* in Southern Sotho (Kunene 1971) just to name a few which resemble the *omĩtandu* in Otjiherero.

Although considerable research has been conducted on oral poetry in many African languages, little has been written on oral poetry in Namibian African languages, more particularly in Otjiherero.

References to praises and songs among the Ovaherero date back to the early nineteenth century. Many missionaries preached, traders and hunters toured, and colonists and colonialists stayed among them and referred briefly in their works to Ovaherero poetic practice. For example Vedder (1938: 51) refers to it disdainfully as follows:

“There is, too, no lacks of songs, which are sung by the performer in a monotonous sing-song. As, however, it is the dance-song which is sung in the presence of big gatherings, the knowledge of these little songs has been poorly preserved.... If any one wished to collect the songs, he could fill a large volume with them. The purport of them is very destitute of ideas. The Herero song deals with two subjects only: the deeds of the great men and the colours and qualities of outstanding oxen.”

About the oral poetry among Ovahimba, Ovazemba, Ovakuvale (see footnote 43) and other ethnic groups in the Southern Angola, Estermann (1981:98) similarly remarks

“Our Herero exalt their cattle with songs of praise. Often the melodic litanies are a pure string of names of animals, of their colors, or of their genealogy. There exist, however, more inspired songs, worthy of being classified as poems”.

In contrast to Vedder (1938) as quoted above, he (1981:110) further states that

“the harvest is not as abundant as one would like, but even so it is sufficient to prove that people such as these, living under a seminomadic regimen, do not lack literary expression”.

He gave examples of cattle praises of Ovazemba on page 98 and 99 as evidence for his standpoint reflected in the above quotations.

The earliest Otjiherero praise to appear in print was the ‘Omuepiskopi Gotthardt’ by Rev. Kangootui in 1963 - 1964 in Angelus Newsletter of the Romance Catholic Church at Döbra about 10 km north of Windhoek. It appeared in three parts in three different issues, November 1963, January 1964 and June 1964. In 1975 in the same newsletter there appeared two versions of the praise of Otjomuise (or Windhoek) by Kandjii and Kangombe; in the same year a praise of Okahandja appeared. A third version of the Otjomuise (Windhoek) praise was recorded by Damman in 1978 recited to him by J. G. Kamberipa.

Sulzer (1981) presented German translations of Otjiherero praise texts, together with annotations, but without the original Otjiherero texts. This makes reconstruction of Otjiherero texts impossible. The reconstructed texts would likely be translations of the German versions, but not the original texts. Some characteristic features may disappear in the process of reconstruction. Ohly (1990:2) comments as follows as far as Sulzer’s publication is concerned.

“It is not surprising that P. Sulzer, when presenting specimens of Namibian poetry in German translation, imagined he was dealing with the emergence of poetry in Namibia (Sulzer 1981:7). He did not recognize that the Herero praise-songs in his collection were imitations of a traditional genre.... Sulzer was also of the opinion that this emergence of poetic creation had been stimulated by the Christian mission, as it had been, in his view, everywhere in Africa.”

In 1985 the collection of poems, *Ozondambo zaTjipangandjara*, edited by Kamupingene appeared. Only two of the poems in this collection may be classified as praises, namely the praise of Maharero and that of Kahimemua.

Dammann (1987) also includes few praises in his book with German translations

and annotations. "Dammann's publication constitutes a breakthrough in literary research. The songs poems [sic], which he annotated with philological comments, afford a deep insight into the kind, structure, and level of oral creativity." (Ohly 1990:3)

In 1989 Alnaes made a scholarly historical treatment of the Otjiherero songs of Ovaherero in Botswana. Her treatment of these songs is the richest discussion of Otjiherero oral poetic texts so far. Her centre of interest is the historical facts in songs. She relates songs to Ovaherero history, especially the Ovaherero-German war of 1904 which forced them into exile. She concentrates on songs that are largely performed by women such as wailing dirges and *outjina* (woman dance). Her article "is an attempt to present the Herero's own perception of their experiences during the flight from the Germans in 1904-5, and their adjustment to life in their new country as expressed in songs, legends and oral testimonies" (Alnaes 1989:268).

Henrichsen's (1998) interesting article demonstrates the history of localities as encoded in the farm names and praises of farms, which reconstruct the reality of how land was inhabited before its expropriation and redistribution during the colonial periods. During these periods, large farms were allocated to individual European settlers and Africans were resettled on small and less productive reserves for communal farming. His article focusses on how Otjiherero farm names and praises reflect the history associated with the particular locality, because "Herero praise songs, as they are remembered today", he (1998:5) states, "can be read as local histories of pre-colonial settlements".

This article deals as he points out,

"with constructions of space and landscape by Herero pastoralists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Herero farm names ... are remnants or splinters of a vast memory about precolonial localities among Herero, each of which is remembered not only by its name but by one or several praise songs.... They construct local identification of individuals and families and as such fuse nature, landscape,

biography and thus history. Taken together, they reflect a pre-colonial topology grounded in pastoralist ideology as it evolved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.... Herero praise songs, whilst being representations of the past, do provide important insights into their pre-colonial history. They raise questions that otherwise are not addressed in depth by written material dating from the period” (Henrichsen 1998:5-6).

According to him Otjiherero praises fuse space and time, nature and history, and in so doing tie together people, places and cattle in terms of genealogy and topology, which provide a charter of claim or counterclaim for rights of access to localities and authority over people. He attempts to reflect, as he (1998:20) puts it, “the historical sociology of knowledge of a pastoral people”. Thus he interprets Otjiherero praises from a historical, spatial and temporal perspective with the focus mainly on praises of places (cf. Kaura’s speech in chapter 4 section 4.6 in this thesis).

Ohly’s (1990) treatment of Otjiherero songs, dances and praises is also among the best pioneering works in the right direction, though his terminology and exposition are difficult to understand. He analyses songs, dances and praises from Damman (1987), Kamupingene (1985), Angelus Newsletter (1963 - 1975) and the animal praises from my field research in Kaokoland in 1988.

Mans (1998) focuses on the performance and music of the songs of the Ovahimba and Ovazemba in Kaokoland. She does not make any analysis of texts. Her article describes dances and traditional musical instruments in detail.

Scholarly studies of Otjiherero are of a very limited number. From the above cited publications, there are the articles by Alnaes (1989), Henrichsen (1998) and Mans (1998), and a monograph by Ohly (1990). At present no full fledged systematic study of Otjiherero oral poetry exists.



## **PART TWO: APPROACHES, ANALYSES AND CONCLUSION**

This part explains approaches and the way in which praises are analysed in this thesis. This is followed by the analysis and interpretation of praise texts, and is finally followed by a conclusion that brings the thesis to a close.

### **9. Method of Analysis and Presentation**

This chapter explains how I will go about analysing Otjiherero praises, but first brief reference to the general debate on the approaches used in the studies of oral tradition.

#### **9.1 General Debate**

“It is common knowledge that no theory is perfect. However, people will always differ in the way they react to a given theory. They may either accept it with its flaws or try to modify and complement it; or they may reject it altogether.”  
(Msimang 1990:308)

Oral tradition including oral literature is a multi-disciplinary field of study with contributions from sociologists, anthropologists, ethnologists and folklorists. Vast quantities of oral texts have been collected and “several seemingly irreconcilable approaches”, as Tala (1989:1) puts it, have been developed. Repeating the general debate about the approaches used in the studies of oral tradition in general and oral literature in particular would be superfluous. For detailed discussion of the general debate see Tala (1989), Msimang (1990), Finnegan (1970), Scheub (1975), Möhlig (1986), Apo (1990) and Canonici (1986).

#### **9.2 Summary of the Scope of Analysis**

The main focus of this thesis is upon what the oral poet does with the language, and we shall try to explain:

- the nature of the 'grammar' of praise;
- its internal organisation and patterning;
- the functions that it has evolved to serve.

In seeking to determine the nature of the grammar of praise, we are in fact looking for principles which govern the kinds of grammatical operations that are frequently used in praises. Thus we want to know the facts on which the oral poet bases his opinions, the characteristics the oral poet attributes to the topic of praising and the ways the oral poet manipulates the language to produce the most appropriate effects. In investigating these, this thesis emphasizes the following three questions in the analysis of Otjiherero praises:

- **What** does the oral poet say and mean?
- **How** does the oral poet say what he wants to say?
- **Why** does the oral poet say what he says, and in the way he does?

In attempting to answer the 'how' questions one may examine the ways in which the oral poet arranges the information in a praise. The 'how' questions are essentially concerned with the patterns of syntactic expression created by stylistic techniques the oral poet uses to convey what he wants to say. Hence the investigation of the structural pattern(s) used by the oral poet in praises. Understanding these patterns reveals some pragmatically conveyed information which assists us in the understanding of praises.

The 'how' questions lead us to the establishment of a common pattern consistently shared by most (if not all) praises. These patterns are discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.

When one tries to answer the 'why' question one may concentrate on the functions and significance of the structural patterns and other stylistic features. The oral poet's choice and arrangement of words contribute largely to the shape

or pattern praises usually take. Here the focus falls on relationships or associations between syntactic entities. The question here is why is the topic named and/or modified by this term or concept? This will be continuously asked such that the significance of relations between entities is exposed.

The 'why' and 'what' questions require a certain amount of insight and understanding of the culture, genealogy and history as rooted in communal conventions and experience in order to detect what is praised and why it is praised. Sometimes the texts themselves yield valuable clues which will lead to external evidence.

The objective of answering these questions is to pinpoint the manner and the purpose of praising the topic in question. It tries to discover how the oral poet **arranges** and **expresses** the information, and how he **presents** it in linguistic expressions and what he **means** by that linguistically expressed information.

During the analysis of praises these questions are not answered individually, but kept in mind and asked again and again during the discussion. In order for them to be asked, praise texts need to be analysed, but before analysis the transcription and translation of praises, as oral products, are essential.

### 9.3 Transcription and Translation Technique

Transcription captures utterances in a written form. To be able to analyse and interpret praises we need to take a praise text as our point of departure.

Putting an utterance on paper is not an easy task and it is not randomly done. It needs first to be divided into lines and other units of information. Thus transcription is the first simple interpretation of praises. During transcription I undertook slight editing and modification where I felt it necessary. Editing and modification were done where an informant made a mistake and corrected himself.

In that case only the correction was transcribed. Punctuation in praises is restricted to a few punctuation marks such as colons and double quotes to indicate examples of direct speech within a praise.

On paper, praises are laid out in accordance with the recursive subordinating distribution of information, in a way that tries to capture these recursive patterns.

Although the translation is slightly literal, I tried to make the English as readable as possible, and to leave it with a poetic flavour. To make a sound translation of praises one needs a thorough understanding of them. I may acknowledge the difficulties of translation of praises, or any text intended for performance, and Sherzer and Woodbury (1987:10) also admit the difficult of translating oral texts that “even the best translator will not be able to mirror the structural features of the original in a translation and still preserve the original meaning in all its delicacy”. In the translating process, some of their poetic flavour disappears which leaves the English text, to my mind, tasteless and dry, and sometimes pale in comparison to the original text in Otjiherero. A praise is also difficult to understand even for a native speaker. Therefore misunderstanding and mistranslation are not totally excluded, but I tried to eliminate them as far as possible. For detailed discussion of translating problems of oral literature, see Okombo (1994) and Mutahi (1994).

#### **9.4 Definition of Terminology**

During the analysis and discussion of praises, some specialised terms are used which are defined and explained in this section to minimise ambiguity.

##### **9.4.1 Praise Sentence (PrS)**

The structure of sentences in praises differs from the structure of normal or usual sentences. In this thesis the term praise sentence is used to distinguish it from a

usual sentence as known in the syntactic analysis of sentences in general language use. The structure of the praise sentence is discussed in detail in chapter 11, section 11.1.1.

A praise sentence consists of a referent (9.4.2.) and epithet (9.4.3.) as its major constituents. The referent is the thing praised and the epithet a unit of information which modifies or describes it.

#### **9.4.2 Referent (Ref)**

The referent is the entity being praised which thus far has been referred to as the topic of praising. (Hereafter the term referent is used throughout.) A referent is the fundamental core which everything in a praise, directly or indirectly, refers to. During praising the referent is consistently and constantly kept in mind as the focus or core of praising and serves as the point of departure for each epithet.

#### **9.4.3 Epithet (Epith)**

The epithet is the second constituent of the praise sentence which describes or modifies the referent linked to it with a linking element or appositional. Thus an epithet is a descriptive unit which has an internal structure that is consistent and flexible. An epithet comprises two types of information: the key information and complementary information.

The boundaries between praise sentences in a praise are not easily delimited in terms of performance, because of the rapid delivery of praises as explained under the literary competence above. The demarcation of praise sentences is dependent on independent information within each epithet which leads to the question of how epithets are identified in this thesis.

When I was interviewing Mr Kaputu, my main informant, on 5 July 1998 in

Windhoek, I asked him to chant the praise of Okahandja for me. He replied that Okahandja has 'many praises'. My interpretation of his 'many praises' is that the praise of Okahandja is composed of many of what we shall be calling epithets in this thesis. These epithets are actually independent descriptive units, each of which may be conceived of as a praise in its own right. In this light, an epithet is an independent descriptive unit that describes the referent and contains independent information in its own right. In most cases each epithet shares information with neither a preceding nor a following one. One may argue that epithets may share information but each epithet neither flows out of the preceding one nor continues into the next. Each epithet describes the referent independently. In this way each epithet is independently linked to the referent. Together with the referent, the epithet forms a complete praise sentence. Note this is essentially an abstract entity because the referent is not actually uttered in performance.

In a very few instances the information coincidentally overlaps on a semantic level given that they describe the same referent. This overlap does not destroy the independence of information. It is easy to identify epithets on the basis of encoded independent information. For instance, the rhinoceros is described by the following two epithets:

Digging stick of Ndanda of Karukua

Bags of Mindunda from which berries fell out

Each of these two epithets describes the rhinoceros directly without an overt grammatical link between them. Each conveys an independent description of the rhinoceros.

Another two criteria for identifying epithets are the exchangeability and locative markers. When two or more units may be swapped or exchanged without negatively affecting the praise, then they are classified as different epithets. Each epithet in the praises of places starts with a locative marker. One or a combination

of two or all three criteria is used to identify epithets in this thesis.

After the identification of epithets in a praise, numbers are consecutively allotted to them for the ease of cross reference and exposition.

An epithet is made up of a linking element (9.4.8) which is optional and a keyword phrase (9.4.7).

#### **9.4.4 Keyword (Kw)**

Kunene (1971) coined a term 'eulogie' to explain the behaviour of these prominent words in Sotho praises. Kuse (1973), as quoted by Opland (1996:97), describes this prominent word as consisting of "a denominative or deverbative naming component accompanied by a descriptive and/or narrative phrase or phrases .... The phrase or phrases complementing the naming component consist of more than one word and may run into two or three [or more] lines". Opland (1996) refers to these prominent words in praises as nodes or nominal cores. In this thesis a keyword is used as an equivalent to Kunene's 'eulogie', Kuse's denominative or deverbative naming component as well as Opland's node or nominal core.

The information in a praise may be classified into 'key' and 'complementary' information. Within each epithet the complementary information describes or modifies the key information. Thus a keyword serves as an initiator or carrier or introducer of the key information in a particular epithet, and also serves as the core of the particular epithet. Because of the pivotal role played by the keywords, they are **boldfaced** in praise texts to highlight their significance.

#### **9.4.5 Complement (Comp)**

The keyword is modified, described or expanded by the complementary

information that follows it, linked to it with a linking element or appositional, and consequently this information is referred to as complement(s). In this thesis two or more complements that describe the same keyword will be labelled complement 1a, 1b etc where necessary (see diagram 9 for example). This is because of the recursive subordinating system of praises. Like the epithet, a complement comprises a linking element (9.4.8) and a headword phrase (9.4.7). Complements are numbered for convenience.

#### **9.4.6 Headword (Hw)**

Like the keyword the headword heads its complement(s). In fact a headword is a sub-keyword. All headwords in praise texts are *italicised*.

#### **9.4.7 Keyword and headword Phrase**

A keyword and headword phrases are phrases consisting of a keyword and headword and its complement(s) respectively. A keyword phrase or headword phrase is a phrase that is headed by the keyword or headword respectively. When the keyword or headword and its complement are appositionally linked, then it is equal to an epithet or complement (see diagram 2 below).

#### **9.4.8 Linking**

The entities in a praise do not function in isolation, but in relation to entities that precede and follow. Thus a link exists between entities which, in many instances, is realised by a linking element<sup>46</sup> (LinE). The linking process in praises is facilitated by these linking elements which may be co-ordinators or subordinators that function as linking devices or relation signals or connectives.

For explicit linking purposes we distinguish coordinating and subordinating

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<sup>46</sup> In Otjiherero, a linking element has a structural and referential function.



linking, since they introduce co-ordinate and subordinate phrases and clauses, and express relations of possession, addition, contrast, place, time, result etc.

Subordinating linking is the most frequently used in praises because of the recursive subordinating structure of praises. In subordinating linking the preceding entity embeds the following one through a subordinator (subordinating connective). In praises, possessive markers (PosM), relative markers (RelM), nominal agreement (NoA), locative markers (LocM), class markers (ClasM) and comparative markers (ComparM) are all used as subordinators which respectively mark possessive, relative, nominal, verbal (active) and comparative relationships. Thus subordinators realise the subordination process in a particular relationship. At a syntactic level, the comparative marker that links entities within a simile behaves as a co-ordinating marker, but at the semantic level from a functional point of view it is a subordinator because the second entity modifies the first. A co-ordinating connective links equivalents, which have the same role to play.

Sometimes the entities in a relationship are not linked by means of a linking element or agreement, but appositionally linked by juxtaposition. The appositional linking is mainly used when a noun modifies another noun.

The following examples illustrate the linking process in praises:

Co-ordinating and subordinating linking:

Tjiponda wahi yaTovekua na hi yaNangombe

Tjiponda of the father of Tovekua and the father of Nangombe.

(Tjiponda, epithet 3, appendix 4)

The possessive markers *wa-* 'of' and *ya-* 'of' serve as subordinating linking elements while the conjunction *na* 'and' is a co-ordinating one.

Appositional linking:

Ekuv' omuhere

The axe the handleless/stalkless

(Hyena, epithet 9, appendix 2)

The *ekuva* 'axe' and *omuhere* 'stalkless' or 'handleless' are both nouns that are juxtaposed without having been linked with a linking element or agreement. Thus they are appositionally linked.

The significance of linking elements (or relation signals) is to link entities and in so doing, they reveal the form of an epithet. The linking elements are further discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.4. The linking elements are underlined in praise texts.

#### 9.4.9 The Referent-Epithet Structure (R-E Structure)

"Each text contains within itself the possibility of an infinite set of structures."

(Culler 1975:242)

The language itself potentially produces an infinite number of possible structures, and it exposes itself to the pragmatic manipulation of these possibilities, something which the oral poet does to produce his intended effects through particular structures. The R-E structure presented here may be conceived of as one of the possible structures of praises.

Here, 'structure' is meant as the organisation or arrangement of elementary parts or syntactic constituents of a praise and the patterns they form in relation to their functions. The division of information into constituents or information units in accordance with its functions is a way of analysing the encoded message. This flow (or sequence) of information gives a praise its information structure, which is analysed here as the R-E structure, because of the strong semantic bond between the referent and each epithet. (For further discussion see chapter 11, section 11.1.1)

The R-E pattern shows how information is distributed within a complex structure according to the significance and function of each piece of information. Each epithet is a complex structured unit of information.

An epithet has a pattern that consists of a keyword slot and complement slot. The keyword slot is the position that is allotted to or intended for the keywords and the complement slot for complementary information. The complement slot comprises a linking slot and headword phrase slot. The headword phrase consists of a headword slot and a complement slot, but all syntactic constituents which occur in the first complement slot are subordinates to the keyword, and those in the second complement slot are dependent on or dominated by the headword. An example of the recursively embedding R-E structure of praises is shown in the table and tree diagram below. The example used here is taken from the rhinoceros praise, epithet 2. The praise of the rhinoceros is analysed in detail later in this study in chapter 10, section 10.1.

*Table 1: The R-E Structure*

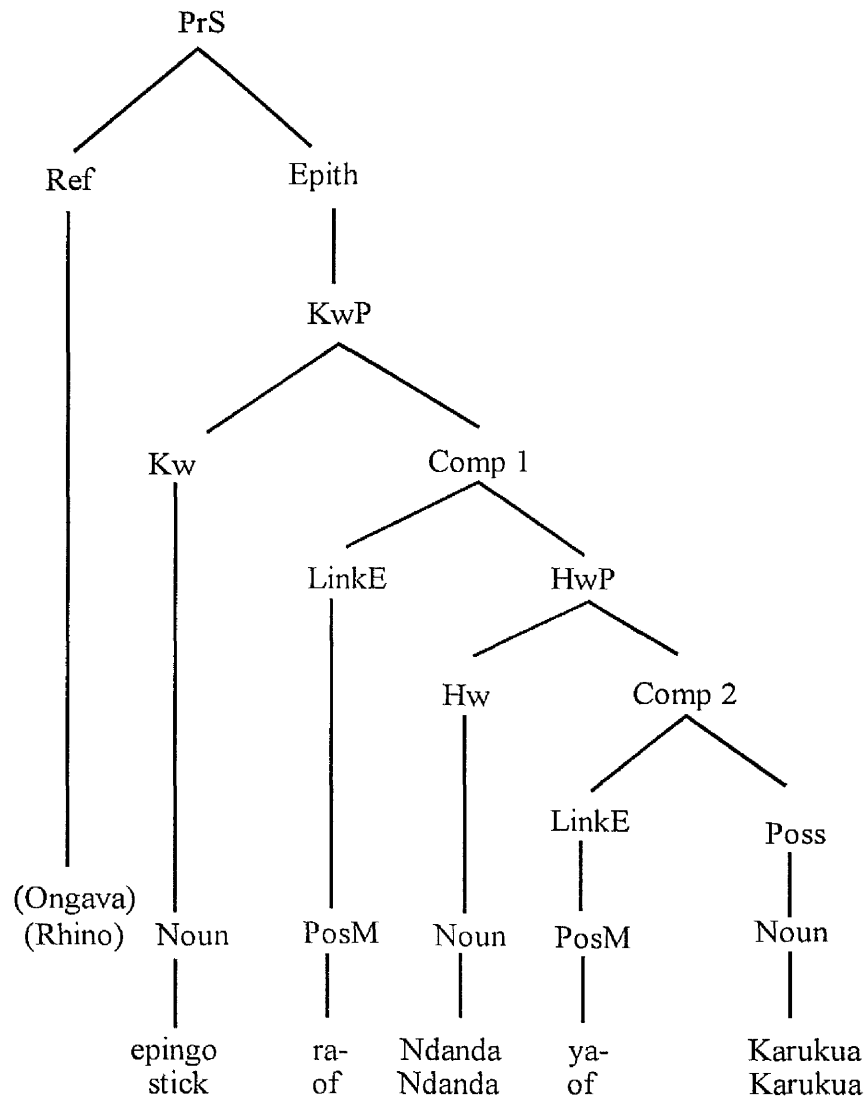
Referent	Epithet				
	Keyword phrase				
	Keyword	Complement 1			
		LinkE	Headword phrase		
			Headword	Complement 2	
				LinkE	Possessor
Rhino <i>Ongava</i>	Digging stick <i>Epingo</i>	of <i>ra-</i>	Ndanda <i>Ndanda</i>	of <i>ya-</i>	Karukua <i>Karukua</i>

The table summarises the information, stating simply that the sum of the keyword and its complement form the largest complementing unit. This unit is the keyword phrase (which in this case equals epithet), which modifies the referent, the thing praised.

In the above table the digging stick has more descriptive value than Ndanda. (For relative values of entities see chapter 11, section 11.1.5)

The same information in the above table may also be illustrated with a tree diagram, as set out below.

*Diagram 2: The R-E Structure as Exemplified by an Epithet*



The purpose of this tree diagram is to show the relationships between the various parts, starting with the largest unit downwards through the hierarchy to the smallest unit.

In this example the name Ndanda plays a dual role, firstly as part of the complement 1 and secondly as a headword which heads complement 2 that

follows it. The distinction is clearly marked by the use of two different possessive markers, i.e. *ra-* and *ya-*, as relation signals. The possessive marker *ra-* signals the possessive relation between the digging stick and Ndanda whereas *ya-* signals the similar possessive relationship between Ndanda and Karukua. Such a distinction is difficult to pin down when both the keyword and the headword belong to the same noun class, because their possessive markers will be identical. (See appendix 1 for the concordance system of possessives - in the table the past tense markers are identical to possessive markers)

The nodes in tree diagrams above are functional units of different ranks. This shows that praises are organised in a hierarchy of information units. Within an epithet each unit is headed or subordinated by the one that precedes it. The units represent the way in which meanings are patterned and expressed in praises.

## 10. Analysis of Samples

“Interpretation is not a matter of recovering some meaning which lies behind the work and serves as a centre governing its structure; it is rather an attempt to participate in and observe the play of possible meanings to which the text gives access.”

(Culler 1975:247)

In the preceding chapter I have given a brief survey of the ways in which praises will be analysed. In this chapter, five praises are analysed as samples which are chosen and discussed in order of the complexity of the structure, starting with the animal praises (rhinoceros) with simple structure through to the radio praise which is much more complex in structure. The rhinoceros's praise is chosen as a sample because it is also analysed by Ohly (1990) and is taken here to show that an alternative interpretation is possible to the one he presents. The Okahandja praise represents the praise of places, because Okahandja is an *ongumbiro yOvaherero* 'prayer of Ovaherero' which means the sacred capital of Ovaherero where they hold annual commemorations in August. Maharero was the most powerful paramount chief of the Ovaherero chiefs. The Ovakwatjivi lineage is my lineage. The radio praise is the most differently patterned in my corpus, because of its verb epithets, introductory and concluding epithets. Another example of each praise group is given in appendices 2 - 6.

These samples are analysed in order of the complexity of their structures. The praise of the rhinoceros has the simplest structure and is done first. The radio praise has the most complicated structure of all praises and is the last to be looked at. The differences and similarities in their structure are discussed in section 11.1.1.

In this chapter the syntactic forms of praises are interpreted in terms of what they contribute to meaning, how they function and how the syntactic units are patterned in praises.

The oral poet's thoughts and words shape the nature of the form and relationships that exist between the entities within a praise. In analysis each entity will not be interpreted in isolation but in relation to other entities with which it is structurally associated.



## 10.1 Animal Praises

### Ongava (Rhinoceros)

- 1     **Ozondjaṭu**  
      zaMindunda  
      mu mwa tik' ozohe nozonyandi
- 2     **Epingo**  
      raNdanda  
          yaKarukua
- 3     **Ekonev'**  
      okotjivango
- 4     **Omupoṭu**  
      wondjuwo  
          okakunde
- 5     **Ongondamivanda**  
          okotjikutwi  
              mu wa hit' eseno
- 6     **Onyanda**  
      yaNepera  
      yaNehambo
- 7     **Ongokoravitamba**  
          aayo i nekuva
- 8     **Ondindi**  
      yaKazeriuongo  
      yozongak'  
          otjikazona
- 9     **Onyanda**  
      yaTjikuatji
- 10    **Okaper'**  
      okeumbanyo
- 11    **Okuritupuk'**  
      omuhuka
- 12    **Okuyendangurov'**  
          outuku
- 13    **ombikamiti**  
      okoviuru  
      ndji mai tja:  
          mbi ṭu mbande yongengeza  
          hi ṭu mbande yeyova  
              mbande yeyova  
                  me i umbu onya  
                      yandje  
                      yamukaa  
                          Tjazupi

- 
- 1     The **bags**  
           of Mindunda  
           from which berries<sup>47</sup> fell out
  - 2     The **digging stick**  
           of Ndanda  
                   of Karukua
  - 3     The **cunningness**  
                   with big hip
  - 4     The **blind person**  
                   of the *hut*  
                                 bean coloured
  - 5     The **passage-crosser**  
                   with big *ear*  
                                 that's entered by contempt
  - 6     The **caprine**  
           of Nepera  
           of Nehambo
  - 7     The **plot-clearer**  
           as if it has an axe
  - 8     The **thick** [animal]  
           of Kazeriuongo  
           with *shoes*  
                   women-like
  - 9     The **caprine**  
           of Tjikuatji
  - 10    The **apron** [coloured]  
           with protruding mouth
  - 11    **Dawn**  
           is midday
  - 12    **Dusk**  
           is midnight
  - 13    The **tree-wrestler**  
           with big nose  
           that's saying:  
                   "I am killed by a brave wide-awake [hunter]  
                   I am not killed by a brave dare-devil  
                                 dare-devil  
                                 I'll throw *horn*  
   of mine  
   of the *wife*

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<sup>47</sup>     The *ozohe* (berries from *omuhe* - *crewia flavescens*) and *ozonyandi* (berries from *omunyandi* - *diospyros mespiliformis*) are simply and collectively translated as berries. The scientific names of these trees are found in Malan and Owen-Smith 1974:163 (no. 182) and 156 (no. 84) respectively.

of Tjazupi”

(Adapted from Ohly 1990:44-45, with the translation<sup>48</sup> slightly edited)

As you may have realised in reading the above text, a most interesting aspect of the internal structure of an epithet is the way in which the oral poet plays entities against each other. An attempt will be made here to explain the meaning of what the oral poet says by interpreting each entity in relation to the preceding and following entity. The term relation as used hereafter means the interconnection or interdependency of entities in a particular relationship: the way in which one entity is related or connected to another. The entities in relation are separated by a colon as a heading of the discussion which will follow. The relation in **bold** indicates the main relation (between the referent and the keyword) of the particular epithet and those in *italics* sub-relations (between keywords or headwords and their complements).

## Epithet 1

### **Rhino: bags**

This is a metaphoric description in which the oral poet describes the rhinoceros metaphorically as well as synecdochically<sup>49</sup> as the bags. It is a metaphor in the sense that the bags represent the rhinoceros' belly, since both are containers and have a round shape - features shared by both belly and bags. It is synecdoche

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<sup>48</sup> For differences in translations see table 4, appendix 8. Although I collected and translated the animal praises for Ohly (1990), he slightly edited my translations, and now I do not agree with some of my translations for Ohly (1990). Note that because of the layout of praises adopted in this thesis, the adjectives in my translations follow the noun they modify, while in Ohly's (1990) translations they precede them. This difference in layout is not included in table 4 and 5.

<sup>49</sup> Synecdoche is a trope in which an actual part signifies the whole. In a large number (if not all) of synecdochic relations in Otjiherero praises, parts stand for wholes. This example may be termed a metaphoric synecdoche, because it is a metaphor and simultaneously a synecdoche.

because the oral poet uses the actual part of the body (i.e. belly) to represent the rhinoceros as a whole.

One may wonder why the oral poet uses the plural form (bags) to refer to the rhinoceros' belly. The oral poet may be referring to the rhinoceros' bowels as well as its belly. Ovaherero frequently refer to bowels as *omaura* 'intestines' in the plural form.

The concept of bags is further expanded in the praise as follows:

*bags: Mindunda*

The rhinoceros' belly (or bowels) is metaphorically likened to Mindunda's bags. Mindunda was a gatherer of wild berries and fruits, who is here identified as the owner of these bags. The possessive marker *za-* 'of' explicitly signals the possessive relation between the bags and Mindunda.

*bags: wild berries*

The rhinoceros is a herbivore and Mindunda was a gatherer, both were competing for wild berries. Mindunda was collecting berries in his bags and the rhinoceros was foraging and putting berries into its belly or bowels. Because of this competition a conflict arose between these two competitors. The rhinoceros chased Mindunda who, while in flight, became very frightened and threw the bags away, thus the berries were scattered around. Some people say that the rhinoceros stabbed the bags with its horn and that the berries scattered that way. In this way the content of Mindunda's bags was exposed, which in terms of the praise metaphor means that the content of the rhinoceros' bags (bowels) was also indirectly exposed. The common feature is thus not only the shape of these containers, but also the content of these containers which is to a certain extent similar if not identical.

When the rhinoceros empties its bowels, its dung consists of half-digested twigs and kernels or stones of these berries which are sometimes clearly identifiable. Therefore the bags from which berries fell out may be interpreted as the bowels from which berries dropped during defecation. In this way the bags equal bowels, falling out equals defecating, and berries equal droppings for its dung.

The relation between the bags and wild berries is marked by the locative relative marker *mu mwa* 'from which'. In Otjiherero the relative marker of noun class 18 consists of these two grammatical items.

## **Epithet 2**

This epithet was also used to illustrate the R-E structure in table 1 and diagram 2 above.

### **Rhino: digging stick**

Similar to the preceding relation (i.e. rhinoceros and bags) this is also a metaphoric-synecdochic description. The digging stick is a metaphoric description of the rhinoceros' horn, and the horn, as a part of the body, represents the rhinoceros as a whole. In the praise it is stated that the rhinoceros equals the digging stick, which is actually its horn. The common ground between the rhinoceros' horn and the digging stick is sharpness, hardness (or strength) and function. The digging stick as the keyword of this epithet is expanded as follows:

#### *Digging stick: Ndanda*

Ndanda is identified as the digger to whom the digging stick belonged. Ndanda used her digging stick to unearth edible onions and roots from the ground. Similar to Ndanda, the rhinoceros used its 'digging stick' (= horn) to uproot trees, and to 'unearth' berries from Mindunda's bags, as explained in the discussion of the

preceding epithet. Thus the function of the rhinoceros' horn and the digging stick is similar. The possessive marker *ra-* 'of' signals the possessive relationship between the digging stick and Ndanda, the digger and the owner of the digging stick.

*Ndanda: Karukua*

Ndanda is identified as a descendant of Karukua. This possessive relationship is signalled by the possessive marker *ya-* 'of'.

### **Epithet 3**

#### **Rhino: cunningness**

This is a metonymic description in which *ekoneva* 'cunningness', a behaviour associated with the rhinoceros, represents the rhinoceros. Many Ovaherero regard the rhinoceros to be a cunning and dangerous animal. It hides behind bushes and waits for approaching people to come closer and then rushes at them. Some also believe that a rhinoceros cunningly stalks people, and sometimes kills them. With this in mind the oral poet described the rhinoceros as a cunning animal.

*Cunningness: hip*

How on earth could cunningness have a hip? This relation is unusual, because of the seemingly incongruous juxtaposition of these entities in a non-apparent relationship. In most cases abstract concepts are used to describe concrete concepts. Here an abstract concept (i.e. cunningness) is described by a concrete concept (i.e. hip). In this context the concept of cunningness represents the rhinoceros as explained in the above relationship. To make the relationship understandable cunning may be concretized to represent the rhinoceros. After concretization the relation between these two entities becomes obvious and can be

interpreted as follows. The description of the rhinoceros as a cunning animal is extended through the addition of the big hip. Thus it is the rhinoceros which has a hip, but not cunningness as it seems to be. Cunningness and hip are juxtaposed in this relationship by implication that both are used to describe the rhinoceros.

As one can infer from the tone and context of this praise, the possessive marker *ok-* and the noun class prefix *otji-* are collectively used to emphasize the hugeness of the rhinoceros' body size. Thus here the rhinoceros is described as having a large hip which represents its body size. In the same way the oral poet derogatorily and/or augmentatively describes the rhinoceros as having big and/or ugly ears, snout and nostrils in epithets 5, 10 and 13 respectively. For further discussion see chapter 11, section 11.1.9.

#### **Epithet 4**

##### **Rhino: blind person**

In this relation the rhinoceros is personified and likened to an *omupoŋu* 'blind person' which is used as an equivalent of the rhinoceros. The personified meaning is conveyed by the human nominal class prefix *omu-*. This noun class is known as a human class since only nouns that denote human beings are found in it.

Through this personified description the oral poet emphasizes the poor eyesight of the rhinoceros, an attribute of the rhinoceros which relies heavily on its sharp hearing capacity and its acute sense of smell.

This keyword is expanded as follows.

*Blind person: hut*

In this relation the concept *omupoŋu* 'blind person' represents the rhinoceros

whose skin the oral poet compares to a hut.

Ovaherero build their huts and plaster them with a mixture of cattle dung and mud. The rhinoceros often wallows in the mud and afterwards looks like a plastered hut. Thus, in this relation the mud covered rhinoceros and the plastered hut have a similar appearance.

This relation is explicitly expressed through a possessive marker *w-* < *wa-* 'of'.

*Hut: bean coloured*

When the dry mud falls off, it leaves spots and cracks on the rhinoceros' skin. In the same way when huts are weathered, similar spots and cracks appear on their walls. In many cases a blind person's hut gets into this condition because the owner is blind and there is nobody to attend to the hut immediately. The reference to the bean coloured refers to white beans with brownish or reddish small spots and stripes. These are the beans with which the colour of the rhinoceros and the hut is compared.

No grammatical item is used to signal the relation, because both *ondjuwo* 'hut' and *okakunde* 'bean' are nouns.

**Epithet 5**

**Rhino: passage-crosser**

The term *omuvanda* 'flat space' refers to an imaginary oblong area or passageway in a homestead between the main hut and *okuruwo* 'sacred shrine' where traffic, guests, new comers, women (especially newly married) and strangers are prohibited from crossing. Crossing it means showing contempt towards the ancestors and the priest of the particular homestead. The rhinoceros as a



‘stranger’<sup>50</sup> is believed to transgress this prohibition. The term *ongondamivanda* ‘passage-crosser’ is a compound, and the structure and significance of compounds and complex nouns are discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.6.

*Passage-crosser: big ear*

Here the oral poet describes the rhinoceros as having a big ear. The possessive relation is expressed with the aid of a combination of *ok-* and class prefix (*otji-*) which collectively contribute an augmentative possessive meaning.

*Ear: contempt*

The rhinoceros is regarded as having a contemptuous attitude towards people. It does not run away when approached by people and its first reaction on seeing a person is to move its ears before it attacks. Because of this, the oral poet here states that contempt entered the rhinoceros’ big ear, associating the movement of the ears with its contemptuous attitude before it attacks. Once again the ear is used as the part that represents the rhinoceros as a whole, in a synecdochic sense. That is why the oral poet uses the singular form, *otjikutwi* ‘big ear’.

The relation is signalled by the locative relative marker *mu mwa* ‘in which’.

## **Epithet 6**

### **Rhino: caprine<sup>51</sup>**

The term *onyanda* ‘caprine’ or ‘small livestock’ appears as a keyword in two

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<sup>50</sup> In this case the rhinoceros is considered to be a ‘stranger’ because it does not stay in this homestead. When it is being hunted with dogs it is often chased to a homestead and it is believed that it should respect the people prohibition.

<sup>51</sup> Caprine is used, here, as a collective noun for goats and sheep (or small livestock), in consultation with Dr Martin Orwin.

epithets in this praise. A caprine owned by Nepera and Nehambo in epithet 6 and Tjikuatji in epithet 9. This is an established metaphor that has become a symbol for a hunted animal. When an Omuhherero refers to a wild animal as a caprine owned by someone, it means that it is (or was) hunted by that person. Therefore, these three men were well known hunters of rhinoceroses. In this relation the oral poet describes the rhinoceros as a widely hunted animal, especially for its horns and thick skin.

The possessive relation between the caprine (i.e. rhinoceros) and its 'possessors' is signalled by the possessive marker *ya-* 'of'.

### **Epithet 7**

#### **Rhino: plot-clearer**

The structure of the compound *ongokoravitamba* 'plot-clearer' is explained in chapter 11, section 11.1.6.

Given the destructive nature of the rhinoceros, the oral poet refers to it as a plot-clearer. Ovaherero clear new plots for new homesteads or fields and in the process they destroy trees. The same information about the destructive nature of the rhinoceros is also conveyed by the digging stick and tree-wrestling epithets. Thus plot-clearing for destruction of trees is a behavioural characteristic of the rhinoceros which the oral poet wants to reinforce in this relation.

#### *Plot-clearer: axe*

The oral poet compares the rhinoceros' destructive behaviour to trees felled by someone with an axe. This description likens the rhinoceros to someone who clears new plots with an axe. In other words it destroys trees as if it has an axe. The relation between the plot-clearer and someone with an axe is realised by the

use of a comparative marker *aayo* 'as if'.

## **Epithet 8**

### **Rhino: thick**

Through this epithet the oral poet states that the rhinoceros is a large wild animal. Here the adjective *ondindi* 'thick' is used as a noun that describes the size of the rhinoceros' girth, and it is used as equivalent to the rhinoceros.

*Thick: Kazeriuongo*

The oral poet states that this large animal belongs to Kazeriuongo. The relation between Kazeriuongo and the rhinoceros is unknown to me. None of my informants could explain it. This is a possessive relation, but Kazeriuongo cannot own a rhinoceros and a rhinoceros cannot own a person. Possible explanations are that Kazeriuongo was involved in a fight with the rhinoceros or fell victim to its horn.

*Thick: shoes*

Rhinoceroses do not wear shoes, but here the oral poet likens the rhinoceros' feet themselves to shoes. This is a metaphor in which the shoes stand for the rhinoceros' feet.

*Shoes: woman-like*

The adverb *otjikazona* literally means woman-like. Some large women have abnormally large feet and trample upon their shoes until they become flat like the rhinoceros' feet. In this case the oral poet compares these flat shoes with the flat rhinoceros feet.

The substitution of the normal class prefix *omu-* with the prefix *otji-* changes the noun *omikazona* 'girl' or 'daughter' into a descriptive adverb *otjikazona* 'woman-like' or 'female-like'.

### **Epithet 9**

This epithet has the same structure as epithet 6, the only difference being the person, Tjikuatji, referred to in this epithet. Tjikuatji was a well known hunter of rhinoceroses.

### **Epithet 10**

#### **Rhino: apron**

The oral poet renames the rhinoceros as an apron<sup>52</sup>, because it wallows in the mud. When the mud dries on its skin, then it exhibits a colour that looks similar to a person who wears an apron, especially when the mud shows a bright colour.

There is no grammatical item that signals the relationship, because both *ongava* 'rhinoceros' and *okapera* 'apron' are nouns. The apron is stated in a diminutive form through the substitution of its normal class prefix *oru-* with *oka-*.

*Apron: mouth*<sup>53</sup>

In this relation the apron represents the rhinoceros. The oral poet further states

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<sup>52</sup> An animal is said to have apron-like colour when it has a large white spot on its belly or low on its side (especially on the hind side) on a brownish background, so that it could be likened to a person wearing a white apron. The colours in praises are based on cattle colour patterns.

<sup>53</sup> My father used to chant this alternatively as *okaper' okehende* 'apron with big pole'. Here he referred to the rhinoceros' horn as a pole, but not as a digging stick as in epithet 2.

that the rhinoceros has an ugly protruding mouth, referring particularly to the hooked lip of the rhinoceros that protrudes as it hooks over the lower lip.

The ugly mouth or lip of the rhinoceros is conveyed by a derogatory meaning in the combination of the derogatory possessive marker *ok-* 'with' and the class prefix *e-*. Therefore this derogatory possessive marker and the class prefix collectively signal the possessive relationship between the rhinoceros and its ugly mouth.

### **Epithets 11 and 12**

These epithets are structured in a parallel pattern. The meanings supplement one another, and are therefore discussed together.

#### **Rhino: dawn & dusk**

The concepts dawn and dusk occur in a contrasting parallel pattern. The syntactic parallelism invites the reader to search for connections in the meanings of the two parallel epithets. In this case, dawn contrasts with dusk, as midday and midnight contrast. This is a contrasting parallelism because contrasting ideas are patterned in the same way. This description stresses the tardy behaviour of the rhinoceros as repeatedly observed by Ovaherero. With this parallel description the oral poet reinforces the idea that the rhinoceros is always delayed. It always arrives at a water hole at midday or midnight, although delayed arrival seems not to be its intention as it starts to walk to the water hole early in the morning or evening.

Ovaherero observed the rhinoceros as a tardy animal or bad time keeper, because they built small huts<sup>54</sup> with stones at the water points in which they waited for the rhinoceros and shot it through small windows of these huts left open for this purpose. They did this because it was dangerous to hunt the rhinoceros in the open

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<sup>54</sup>

These huts are known as *oviḽunga* or *otutatwa* in Otjiherero.

veld. In those days OvaHerero did not possess modern weapons. They used poisoned arrows to shoot rhinoceros. To be effective these arrows had to be shot from a close range, and these huts secured their security from the rhinoceros' aggressive attacks. Some men would see the rhinoceros during the day and when it started to walk to the water point, they would run home to report that it was on its way to the water hole. In the first instance they rushed to the water hole to hide in the shooting huts, and waited until midnight when it made its appearance. From this experience of its delayed arrivals, they concluded that when the rhinoceros starts walking to the water hole by dawn or dusk then it arrives at the water hole by midday or midnight respectively. With this observation in mind they praise it in this way.

### **Epithet 13**

#### **Rhino: tree-wrestler**

The oral poet compares the rhinoceros with a bull which wrestles with trees and anthills to sharpen its horns. In the process it destroys the trees. The tree destroying nature of the rhinoceros is also conveyed by the plot-clearing and digging stick description.

#### *Tree-wrestler: nose*

This tree-wrestler image is expanded to be sarcastically described as having a big or ugly nose (with which it also destroys trees). This sarcastic or satirical or derogatory description is conveyed by the derogatory possessive marker (*ok-*) together with class prefix (*ovi-*). This sarcasm refers to the wide nasal cavities of the rhinoceros which help it to smell keenly.

#### *Tree-wrestler: hunter*

In this praise while the rhinoceros is said to be sharpening its weapon by wrestling with trees and anthills, it is represented as warning its enemies. It is interesting to note that the warning is stated in direct speech within the praise. The warnings are patterned in a contrasting parallelistic pattern, i.e.

I am killed by a brave wide-awake [hunter]

I am not killed by a brave dare-devil

Firstly the contrast is realized in the sense that the first line is constructed in a positive form while the second appears in a negative form, i.e. killed vs not killed. Secondly there is the contrast wide-awake vs dare-devil.

The term *mbande yeyova* 'brave dare-devil' implies a daring adventurous hunter in a pretentious display of fearlessness. This parallelism reveals two contrasting displays of fearlessness - a fearless wide-awake hunter on the one hand and fearless pigheaded hunter on the other. Because of a lack of fear for the consequences the reckless pigheaded hunter falls victim to the rhinoceros' horn. Here the oral poet emphasizes the fact that a hunter of rhinoceros must be vigilant at all times, otherwise he may fall victim to its horn. For the discussion of parallelism and equivalence, and emphasis, and their significance in praises see chapter 11, section 11.1.13 and 11.1.7 respectively.

In the direct speech put in the mouth of the rhinoceros, it praises its horn as belonging to the wife of Tjazupi. The allusion to Tjazupi's wife is obscure, but it may be interpreted as follows:

Tjazupi's wife was a gatherer or digger who fell victim to the rhinoceros' horn. Thus, the rhinoceros praises its horn as a useful weapon which stabbed the wife of Tjazupi to death. In this relation the rhinoceros explains its own behaviour when it is hunted which serves as a warning to the hunters. The oral poet here gives information about what is regarded as passing in the rhinoceros' mind.

The significance of direct speech in praises is further discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.7 (under emphasis).

The reporting relative clause *ndji mai tja* ‘that’s saying’ links the rhinoceros with its reported speech and serves as the relation signal.



## 10.2 Praises of Places

### Okahandja (Kenapeṭa Tjatindi - version A)

The following example is a praise of Okahandja, chanted by Kenapeṭa Tjatindi. It is taken as a sample of praises of places, and will also be compared with the other versions of the praise of Okahandja given in appendix 3.

1     **Mekunde**

raTjambi  
yaMuhak'  
onganga  
ndja ri *nomatako*  
*owa nga* ri kovakazendu  
ooina

2     **Motjimbuku**

tjozondu  
zaMujemua

3     **Mekwamo**

raKapehuri  
indi ropehuri  
rozombamb'  
ovikonya

4     **Mohorongu**

yaKatunu

5     **Mohapatwa**

yaKarovi  
ozombandi ai na zo

6     **Mewe**

raKarukua  
ndi mari *pos'*  
aayo ri na *Kahonini*  
moukoto

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1     In the **bean** [coloured cow]

of Tjambi  
of Muhake  
the guinea-fowl [coloured]  
which had *buttocks*  
*like* those that had been on the *women*

their mothers

2     In the **spike-thorn tree**

of the *sheep*



two persons were related to Mbeja, the owner of the cow. Among the Ovaherero there is a tendency to refer to property as belonging to one's father, grandfather or even great grandfather. This practice is often manipulated by oral poets in praises and thus we find a large number of possessive constructions in which an entity is expressed as belonging to more than one owner. In some cases, the historical origin or transfer of that property is included as it was transferred from one owner to another.

Interestingly, the oral poet here uses two different possessive markers to refer to the same thing. The possessive marker *ra-* 'of' refers back to the *e*-noun class to which *ekunde* 'bean' belongs, but the possessive marker *ya-* 'of' refers to the *o(N)*-noun class in which *ongombe* 'cattle' occurs (see appendix 1 for Otjiherero noun classes). This shows clearly that although the oral poet presents Okahandja as the bean, he has the cow in mind.

*Bean: guinea-fowl*

The guinea-fowl is used here to represent its colour. The main differences between the bean and guinea-fowl colour are the background on which the spots occur and the colour of the spots. Livestock is bean coloured when brownish or reddish spots occur on a white background. When white spots occur on a black or brownish or even reddish background, however then that colour is referred to as guinea-fowl. Sometimes these two colours are confused. One person may refer to a bean coloured animal as guinea-fowl coloured, or vice versa. In this way some people referred to this bean coloured cow of Mbeja as guinea-fowl coloured as well.

*Bean: buttocks*

This refers to the fact that this cow was very fat and it had large buttocks and thighs.

The oral poet uses the relative marker *ndja* 'that/which' to refer back to the cow, but not *nda* 'that/which' which would refer to the bean. Although the oral poet relates these expansions to the bean as his keyword, he always has the bean coloured cow in mind, and anaphorically refers to the cow. Thus, the term bean is just a representation of a bean coloured cow. Therefore he uses grammatical markers that refer to the nominal class to which the cow belongs.

#### *Buttocks: women*

The large buttocks and thighs of this cow were comparable to those of the wives of Kariahuua who loved women with large buttocks and married some. Thus he was characteristically known as the man with wives with large buttocks.

The comparative marker *owa* 'like' expresses the relation and the relative marker *nga* 'that' also serves as a link in this relationship.

#### *Women: their mothers*

The characteristics of large buttocks and thighs was genetically transferred to these women's offspring or descendants. Therefore the oral poet states here that the cow had large buttocks like those that had been on the mothers of Kariahuua's children.

Although *ooina* 'their mothers' belongs to a sub class of the human class in which *ovakazendu* 'women' occurs, these two entities behave as if they belong to different nominal classes. They behave in the way non-related nouns would behave. In Otjiherero most kinship terms like *ooina* 'their mothers' have in-built possessive markers.

The simile enhances the description of this cow, since the oral poet compares known with unknown. It is unusual for a cow to have large buttocks, but it is a known fact for women to have large buttocks.

## Epithet 2

### Okahandja: spike-thorn tree<sup>56</sup>

During Maharero's reign there was a huge common spike-thorn tree in Okahandja. This tree was used as a traditional court 'room' or a place where cases were tried.

*spike-thorn tree: sheep*

Two brothers who were nephews of Mujemua had a case relating to sheep as explained in detail below. They brought the case to Maharero in Okahandja to be heard. As usual this case was heard in the court room, i.e. under the common spike-thorn tree.

Before the case was heard, every evening Chief Maharero slaughtered one of these fat-tailed sheep and it was cooked under this common-spike-thorn tree. The two brothers realized that the chief would eat all the sheep and they decided to solve this problem by themselves outside of the traditional court. Thus they divided the sheep between them and went back to their homesteads in the Omuramba area. This tree was then known as the tree at which Mujemua's sheep were eaten by Chief Maharero. After that, Chief Maharero glorified himself as 'victor', because he used the sheep-slaughter strategy to settle the case between the two brothers.

*sheep: Mujemua*

Mujemua was very rich in sheep. He had two nephews, as mentioned above, who were brothers and both potential heirs. When he died, each proclaimed himself to be the rightful heir. According to Ovaherero customary laws, the elder or senior brother is the rightful heir to their uncle's secular properties. Accordingly the elder

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<sup>56</sup> Malan and Owen-Smith (1974:158, no. 122) give the scientific name of this tree as *acacia hebeclada*.

brother proclaimed his uncle's sheep as his, but his younger brother refused as he was the herder or caretaker of these sheep. This degenerated into a conflict situation and became a court case which they took to the traditional court in Omuramba. This court failed to settle the case satisfactorily. They decided therefore to take it to the traditional high court in Okahandja in the hope of a convincing conclusion to their case. In Okahandja they reported this case to Kanjangati Hoveka who was the 'minister of justice'. Chief Maharero informed Kanjangati Hoveka that the case was difficult and he himself would like to be present when it was heard. How the case was settled is explained above.

### **Epithet 3**

#### **Okahandja: belt**

This belt may be understood in terms of the traditional way of dress, similar to the way Ovahimba dress themselves today. This was a traditional belt made out of traditionally tanned leather. This beautifully decorated belt is further explained in detail below.

#### *Belt: Kapehuri*

Kapehuri was a well-known and a very good artist or handyman. He possessed manual and artistic skills in making wagons and other beautiful objects, he probably learned these skills from the Nama. He made himself a very beautifully decorated belt. Kapehuri was related to Tjamuaha as both belonged to the same matrilineage and Tjamuaha was fond of this belt also. He begged for the belt now and then, but Kapehuri refused to give it to him. After Kapehuri's death, his sons took the belt to Tjamuaha and after his death, the belt was inherited by Maharero.

#### *Belt: belly*

This belt was worn on the belly. It may also be possible that the oral poet inserted this elaboration so that *pehuri* 'for belly' and Kapehuri may rhyme. It sounds redundant to say that the belt was made to be worn on the belly. It is obvious that all belts were made in those days to be worn on bellies. Or probably he wants to make a distinction with today's use of belts (fastening trousers) in contrast to the way they were used in past times.

The demonstrative *indi* 'this' and possessive marker *r- < ra-* 'of' mark the relationship here.

#### *Belt: decorations*

This beautifully decorated belt was known among the inhabitants of Okahandja and it obtained a royal meaning since it was associated with the Tjamuaha/Maharero royal house.

#### **Epithet 4**

#### **Okahandja: kudu**

Okahandja is also associated with a kudu bull with a useless hide, but with useful horns. The discussion of the expansion will clarify this.

#### *Kudu: Kaṭunu*

Kaṭunu killed an old kudu bull and he stored its horns for his grave for when he would die. When he was seriously ill he demanded to be taken to Okahandja from Okomiṭa in order to be buried there when he dies. He was taken on a stretcher and the horns of the kudu bull were taken with him to Okahandja. When he died these horns were placed on his grave which indicated that Kaṭunu belonged to the

Ohorongo 'kudu' patrilineage<sup>57</sup>. The kudu is the emblem of this patrilineage and the horns of kudu bulls are placed on their *omaruwo* 'sacred shrines'.

The skin of this old kudu bull was associated with Mujazu. As usual the hide was tanned to be used for sandals, soles of shoes, thongs or straps. Mujazu, the tanner who used to convert raw hides into leathers, tried to tan the hide of this kudu bull, but it was very old and its hide was unusually untannable.

Thus Okahandja was associated with this kudu bull of Kaṭunu with the horns (that gained sacral status) and its useless hide.

## Epithet 5

### Okahandja: non-buttoned

There was a gown (or jacket) in Okahandja that stayed unbuttoned even though it had buttons. The word *ohapatwa* 'non-buttoned' is a complex noun derived from a passive sentence with the aid of the nominalisation technique. The sentence from which this word was nominalised is: *Ombanda kai patwa* 'The cloth is not buttoned' or its relative clause equivalent; *Ombanda ndji ha patwa* 'The cloth that is not buttoned'. The form of this word is illustrated under compounding in chapter 11, section 11.1.6.

This relation may be understood in the context of transition from the traditional way to the western way of dressing. These were the days when the Ovaherero saw and wore western clothes for the first time. Many of them wore their traditional clothes made of animal skin (preferably domestic animals). Those who decided to wear western clothes wore them on special occasions only.

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<sup>57</sup> The hornless domestic animals (cattle, goats and sheep) are taboos in this patrilineage. It is also interesting to note here that the hornless domestic animals are emblems (or totems) for the *ongweyuva* patrilineage. This means that what is a taboo in one lineage could be an emblem in another.



### *Non-buttoned: Karovi*

The trader Lewis, an English man (or Karovi as he was known among or nicknamed by Ovaherero) gave a gown to Maharero. This gown became Maharero's favourite cloth which he wore on special occasions. The garment had buttons but it always stayed unbuttoned. Probably it did not have holes for the buttons. People wondered why that gown of Maharero given to him by Lewis stayed unbuttoned and thus it was a thing of wonder and was taken up into the praise of Okahandja. In the praise this gown is praised as if it still belongs to its original owner, Karovi (Lewis).

### **Epithet 6**

#### **Okahandja: stone**

The term *ewe* 'stone' in this epithet stands for a hillock, a small hill in the middle of Okahandja. Ovaherero still know this hillock as Okawe kOndovi 'Stone with Hole'. Nationally it is known as the Hill of Slaughter. There is a commemorative tablet fixed to it with the following inscription: 'On 23 August 1850 a sanguinary battle took place at this koppie<sup>58</sup> when a number of defenceless followers of the Herero chief Kahitjenne<sup>59</sup> were murdered by Nama under the command of Jonker Afrikaner'. This hillock was proclaimed a national monument by the National Monuments Council in 1972.

### *Stone: Karukua*

This hillock was also associated with Karukua, one of the important elders of that time. Probably Karukua lived near the hillock or was the first victim to be thrown

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<sup>58</sup> Afrikaans word for small hill.

<sup>59</sup> The correct spelling is Kahitjenge.

into its hole.

#### *Stone: sound*

This hillock had a deep hole or cave in its middle. When the wind blew, it whistled when it passed its mouth. Thus the term *ohinini* is an onomatopoeic term derived from the sound made by the wind that passes the hole's mouth. This onomatopoeic word is expressed as if it was a proper name, i.e. Kahonini.

Chief Maharero also used this cave as a means of execution into which he threw those who offended him. One might also be correct to interpret this sound as made by those who were thrown into it.

The relationship is marked by the relative marker *ndi* 'that/which', comparison marker *aayo* 'as if' and proximal locative marker — < *mu* 'in'.

#### *Comparison of versions*

In this section four versions of the praise of Okahandja (as chanted by different oral poets) are compared to illustrate the independence of epithets, similarities and differences in versions, and also to point out both the flexibility and fixity of praises in general.

For the purpose of comparison, the versions are distinguished from one another with capital letters A, B, C and D respectively (see version B, C and D in appendix 3).

#### *Independence of epithets*

As defined in chapter 9 section 9.4.3, an epithet, in this study, means an independent descriptive unit in the sense that it is neither controlled nor directly

related to the preceding nor the following epithet.

The independence of epithets is clearly illustrated by the order of epithets in these four versions. The table below shows how epithets are swapped, skipped or omitted without disturbing the validity of the other or remaining epithets, and the fluency of the praise as a whole. Thus, each epithet is independent in its own right.

*Table 2: The Order of Epithets in Versions*

Epithet	Order of epithets in versions			
	A	B	C	D
<b>bean</b>	1	3	-	4
<b>spike-thorn tree</b>	2	-	2	2
<b>belt</b>	3	-	3	3
<b>kudu</b>	4	-	-	5
<b>non-buttoned</b>	5	-	-	6
<b>stone</b>	6	1	1	1
<b>old-homestead</b>	-	2	-	8
<b>mane-stone</b>	-	-	-	7
<b>house</b>	-	-	-	9
<b>beads</b>	-	-	-	10
<b>lions</b>	-	-	-	11
<b>tomb</b>	-	-	4	-

This table shows that the order of the epithets within a praise is flexible, but the content of each epithet is relatively fixed.

The stone epithet is the first in version B, C and D and sixth in A. The stone, spike-thorn and the belt epithets are respectively first, second and third in at least

three versions. It may be correct to say here therefore that they have the tendency of following one another in that order.

The independent characteristic of epithets also allows oral poets to swap, skip and omit at will. This is clearly revealed by the information in the above table.

In this discussion we showed the independence of each epithet by comparing their order in different versions. But in versions where the same epithet occurs, there are both similarities and differences. These similarities and differences are discussed below.

*Similarities and differences between similar (or same) epithets in versions*

*Version A1, B3 and D4 (bean epithet)*

The keyword and the first complement are identical in all three versions. In version B the first complement is the only expansion of the keyword in that epithet.

The second, third and fourth complements of version A are headed by the keyword *ekunde* 'bean', while in version D the same complements serve as sub-complements that are headed by *ongombe* 'cattle' in the second complement. The term *ongombe* 'cattle' heads another complement which does not occur in the other versions.

In version A the buttocks are compared to those of the women that are their mothers, while in version D they are compared to the wives of Kariahuua, and the praise of Kariahuua is embedded. But the women and the wives of Kariahuua refer to the same individuals.

*Version A2, C2 and D2 (spike-thorn tree epithet)*

Is this maybe an interesting coincidence? This epithet is the second in all three versions in which it occurs. In both versions A and D the epithets are identical, but in version C a further complement is added.

*Version A3, C3 and D3 (belt epithet)*

This epithet is the third in all three versions in which it appears. All three versions share an identical keyword, although it is differently expanded. In version A the keyword is expanded with three complements where the third is further expanded. In version C it is expanded with three complements where the first and third are further expanded, while in version D the second of the two complements is further expanded.

*Version A4 and D5 (kudu epithet)*

The keyword and the first complement are identical in both versions, but a second expanded complement is added in version D.

*Version A5 and D6 (non-buttoned epithet)*

The epithets in these versions are totally identical.

*Version A6, B1, C1 and D1 (hillock epithet)*

The epithets in versions B and D are identical. The epithet in version A differs from the others in tense and the use of the proper name Kahonini instead of the common noun *omundu* 'person'. In version A and C the oral poets use the present continuous tense while in B and D the habitual tense (simple present tense) is used.

*Version B2 and D8 (old-homestead epithet)*

Here the difference is in the complement. The complement in version B is only expanded with Keja. In version D it is expanded by Maheke Tjombe. He embeds *mukaza* 'wife of ...' which embeds Kejao. Note the difference in spelling: Keja = Kejao.

*Epithet C4 (tomb epithet)*

This epithet occurs only in version C. It needs special treatment because it is the latest addition to the praise of Okahandja.

This epithet is dominated by the praise of Chief Hosea Kutako. Kerina (1981: no page number) dedicated his book to him because of his leadership qualities and describes and praises him as follows:

"This great South West African leader was a modest, reserved and impressive man whose wisdom and physical strength were reflected in his decisive leadership and actions. In many years that he held the high office of national leadership he gave that position a special form adapted to his distinctly African talents and character.... Chief Hosea Kutako proved to be a great statesman very well capable of giving the political life of South West Africa<sup>60</sup> worthy and important impulses. He acted with wisdom, courage and integrity in many crucial situations.... The South West African liberation struggle has been plagued with South African racial legislation designed to divide the African people in accordance with the Ethnic Group Areas Act, thus depriving them of their traditional lands. Chief Hosea Kutako mastered this challenge by always finding an objective basis upon which to strengthen his case against the South African government.... Chief Hosea Kutako is the father and leader of this consciousness. He fought for its preservation among our people since the colonization of our country by Germany. He continued to the end of his life to defend the rights of all our people irrespective of their ethnic origin. He stood as the 'Rock of Gibraltar' against the efforts of the South African government to absorb our country. It is due to his initiatives that the case of S.W. Africa figured high in the assemblies of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. His life taught us an important lesson - that the leader who really counts is a man who is actually in the arena of action, whose face is marred by age, dust and sweat, who strives sincerely, prudently, selflessly and valiantly, who knows the great enthusiasms in history, the great devotion in serious human causes, and who spends himself without lowering his concerns to the petty and trivial matters which so often destroy great causes.... As we look over Chief Hosea Kutako's record of unsurpassed leadership and the proud

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<sup>60</sup> Before independence Namibia was known by the name South West Africa.

heritage that he left us we will continue to remember his famous words:

‘O Lord, help us who roam about. Help us  
who have been placed in Africa and have  
no dwelling place of our own. Give us  
back our home’”

This great leader died in 1970 and was laid to rest in Okahandja. In 1972 a very beautiful and expensive tomb was erected on his grave. According to Mr J. A. Kaputu (a well versed oral poet), he added this epithet to the praise of Okahandja in 1972 for the first time in a warrior song he led.

What he actually did here is: he coined the keyword (stone in line<sup>61</sup> 1) and the three complements (beautiful in line 2 and that is on the child in lines 3 and 10), and then he attached two different parts (line 4-9 and line 11-18) of the praise of Chief Kuṭako to the second complement and to the third complement respectively. The third complement (line 10) is actually a repetition of the second complement (line 3) to which the second part (line 11-18) of the praise of Chief Kuṭako is added.

This shows that when one knows praises of places, individuals, lineages etc, like Mr Kaputu does, and knows the ways in which praises are patterned, one may find it easy to create new praises. Because new praises are created with the aid of association, embedding recursive subordination and attachment of other praises. The oral poet associates the referent (thing or entity being praised) with a specific place or person or lineage and then attaches to the new praise the praise(s) of that particular place or person or lineage, especially when the oral poetic grammar of praises is adequately acquired and mastered.

In this way it shows that it is only the referent and the keyword and the first level complements that are new, the attached praises are already known. The skill learned here is the skill of associating entities and attaching other praises, as well as adequate knowledge of and fluency in the oral poetic grammar of praises. This

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<sup>61</sup> Line references in this paragraph are to epithet 4 only.

idea is further pursued in the analysis of the praise of the radio service in chapter 10, section 10.5.

The term *ewe* 'stone' occurs as a keyword in three different epithets, but it refers to three different things.

The *ewe raKarukua* 'stone of Karukua' as in epithet A6, B1, C1 and D1 refers to the hillock in the middle of Okahandja. In epithet C4 *ewe ongongo* 'beautiful stone' refers to the tomb on Chief Kuṭako's grave.

The *ewe otjomurenge* 'stone with mane' in epithet D7 refers to the small hill to the east of Okahandja. The mane-stone or hill has white stones on its top in a row that look like the mane on the neck of the zebra. This mane-hill also has historic significance, because during the Ovaherero-German war in 1904 when the Ovaherero fled Okahandja, they passed or climbed the hill, which is still praised in *omuhiva* dance to remind the Ovaherero of their history. *Ewe otjomurenge pu va/ya rondera* lit. 'the stone with mane which they/it climbed' meaning the hill with mane where they/it passed. In this context of the dance some sing as 'they' that refers to Ovaherero and some as 'it' referring to the Tjamuaha/Maharero royal house which led the war under the command of Chief Samuel Maharero. Thus, though the hill of Karukua (or Hill of Slaughter) and the mane-hill contribute to the description of the physical geography of Okahandja they also have historic significance in the history of Ovaherero.

#### *Epithet D7, 9, 10 and 11*

It is interesting to note here that epithets 7, 9, 10 and 11 occur only in version D. But epithets 8, 9 and 10 have the term *mukaza* ... 'wife of ...' in common. A term that occurs very little in the other versions. The occurrence of this term in this version may be ascribed to the fact that it was chanted by a woman. This may be a way to emphasize the point that women also played a significant part in the culture



and history of our community. On the other hand it is the principal term used by women during wailing ceremonies in which praises serve as wailing dirges and may be used because of this. This point needs separate intensive investigation, in comparing a number of praises chanted by men with those chanted by women.

### *Locative markers*

Another difference occurs in the locative markers. In version A and D the oral poets use the proximal locative marker (*mu*). In B and C the distal locative (*ku*) is used, but in C an *o-* is prefixed to it. This *o-* serves as an emphatic marker which is translated with 'it's ...'. Sometimes another *o-* is added to result in *ook(u)* or *oom(u)* which raises the emphasis to its highest degree. These emphatic morphemes or markers are peculiar to the praises of places only.

Although the meaning of the same epithet in different versions remains the same, its syntactic patterning may be different or it may be differently expressed. The very obvious similarity is that the keywords of similar epithets are identical, but differ in their expansions. Although in some very limited expansions the complements are also identical, the meaning remains the same since the purpose of expansion is not to add new information but to elaborate and enhance the already existing key information.

The main difference here is that a keyword in one version is exhaustively described, or much is said about it, while in another its description is very limited or less is said about it. In this way the keyword or a headword (within the complement) may be minimally or maximally described. This difference in expansion reveals the individualistic flavour of each oral poet in which each expands to an extent in his/her own unique way.

### 10.3 Personal Praises

#### CHIEF MAHARERO

- 1     **Eye**  
      wOtjipuna  
      tjaHengari  
      otjiw'  
      otjikangero
- 2     **Eye**  
      ngo  
      munaa  
      Kandondo  
      kaMuheua
- 3     ongu ri ye  
      munaa  
      Mutondua  
      yaMburo  
      Tjova  
      tjosi  
      yaKaoko
- 4     **Omuzandu**  
      waTjoruzumo  
      tjaMbemba  
      yaJaija
- 5     **Omuzandu**  
      wotumana  
      tuviri  
      oorwaMbondi  
      norwaTjoutuku
- 6     **Eye**  
      ngo  
      oomukaa  
      Tami  
      noomukaa  
      Virunga
- 7     **Eye**  
      omuini  
      oona  
      yaTjizu  
      noona  
      yaNdjavera  
      ovandu  
      ousupi  
      woyaNgava

yaTjondjo  
mbe ha ri na Ngai na *Hepo*  
ina

ya*Kovimbara*  
vyaNanda  
oviwa  
ovikoto  
ovimbara  
oviwa  
mbi *ya vi tungwa*  
nomakuiya  
avi ha kaiyire ozondungo

8     **Eye**  
      *omuangu*  
      womuatje  
          waZemburuka  
          ingwi *Zeraeua*  
              wondungo  
              yaRukeno  
          *omuzandu*  
              waKanako  
              wokuruwo  
                  kongombo

9     Ongu ri **ye**  
      *omu*atje  
          woya*Kandomo*  
              kaTjirongo

10    **Eye**  
      omunene  
      woohi  
          yaUazuma  
      na *hi*  
          yaTjipandera

11    **Hi**  
      yakovand'  
          ovengi  
          *otjimbumba*  
              mba teza *ongombe*  
                  yaNanda  
                  yaNdjaramena  
                  ai ha kakond' okarora

12    **Eye**  
      *oohokuru*  
          *Konguari*  
              yaMutunda  
              yaKambo  
              ombahiyona,

- ongwari*  
ombwa  
ndja tja i sora  
nu ndja toruravayo
- 13    **Eye**  
okotjizire  
kezumo  
owomberipa ya piti utuku  
ngwa ri pozongombe  
zaHukumuna  
waTando na Kamutikirua  
arire tja *nyaere momak'*  
otjomakaya
- 14    **Eye**  
okozohengwapindi  
ngu tenga okuyana  
omuzandu  
ngwa hing' ozongombe  
tji za ya kOmage  
indu tji za kakonda *omuzandu*  
waHoke  
waMbetjiura  
omuwa nozongombe  
nde ri ku ye  
kohimbo  
aayo ku nozongombe  
nde pwa aze ri  
komundu  
ingwi Kazeri  
wongwe  
yaNambura  
ndja turura Ndovazu
- 15    **Eye**  
omuini  
oona  
yaNgonga  
ngu ma *nyinganyinga mezumo*  
otjomuvena  
Tjivanda  
yaKakoto  
yaNderura
- 16    **Eye**  
omuini  
wozondundunyara  
otjOmukwena  
ovaɬena *mave tja:*  
"Ma munik' okarunga",

- ngunda ovaramwe *amave tja*:  
 "Ma munik' ombindiro"
- 17    ...  
       nao otje ri *motjunda*  
           tjavo  
           tjozongombe  
               inda zooHuru na Mungava  
               zooNgaveṭe na Kamaendo  
               inda ozondendu  
                           zooMunee na *Kupenga*  
   wondimba  
   yaPiriko  
               inda ozondendu  
                           zombambarera kotjunda  
   otjozonduwombe  
               inda ndu maze isa po omunameho  
               omupoṭu aze mu esa nao
- 18    Ongu ri **ye**  
           omuini  
           omuhona  
               omunyenanyene  
                   otjovizire koutokero
- 19    Ongu ri **ye**  
           omuini  
           omuhona  
               ngu ya *hungire*  
                   e *riitaverere*  
                           otjozondjimbi
- 20    li, ongu ri **ye**  
           omuini  
           omuhona  
               ngwa *tutumine rumwe*  
                           nombura ai tjeke kOngandjera

- 
- 1    **He**  
       of *Perfume Vessel*  
           of Hengari  
           the fine  
           for smoking
- 2    **He**  
       there [is he]  
       the *son*  
           of *Kandondo*  
           of Muheua
- 3    It's **him**  
       the *son*  
           of *Mutondua*

- of Mburo  
Tjova  
of the *expedition*  
of Kaoko
- 4 The son  
of Tjoruzumo  
of Mbemba  
of Jaija
- 5 The son  
of *weapons*  
two  
that of Mbondi  
and that of Tjouṭuku
- 6 He  
there [is he]  
the *wives*  
of Tami  
and the *wives*  
of Virunga
- 7 He  
himself  
[of] the *mothers*  
of Tjizu  
and the *mothers*  
of Ndjavera  
people  
the short  
of Ngava  
of Tjondjo  
who had not Ngai and Hepo  
the mother  
of Kovimbara  
of Nanda  
the beautiful  
the deep  
*palm baskets*  
the beautiful  
which are made  
with thorns  
as if awls lack
- 8 He  
the *younger brother*  
of the *child*  
of Zemburuka  
who is Zeraeua  
of the *awl*  
of Rukeno

- the *son*  
of Kanako  
of the *sacred shrine*  
of a goat
- 9     It's **him**  
           the *child*  
           of that of *Kandomo*  
                           of Tjirongo
- 10    **He**  
       the great  
       [of] the *fathers*  
                   of Uazuma  
       and *fathers*  
           of Tjipandera
- 11    The **father**  
       of *people*  
       a numerous  
       a *group*  
           which tracked the *cattle*  
                           of Nanda  
                           of Ndjaramena  
                           which didn't cross a trench
- 12    **He**  
       [of] the *ancestors*  
           of *Konguari*  
                   of Mutunda  
                   of Kambo  
                   the brown and white  
                   the beautiful  
                   the *francolin*  
                           which *would sound fine*  
                           but too high-pitched
- 13    **He**  
       with a *shadow on the belly*  
           like a mother at night  
       who tracked the *cattle*  
           of *Hukumuna*  
                           of Tando and Kamutikirua  
       and *crushed them in his hands*  
                           like tobacco
- 14    **He**  
       the thin-legged  
       who praise first  
       the *hero*  
           who drove the *cattle*  
                           when they went to Omenge  
                           when they crossed the *son*

- of Hoke  
of Mbetjiura  
the handsome  
with *cattle on him*  
on the grave post  
as if *cattle look nice*  
on a person  
that's *Kazeri*  
of the *leopard*  
of Nambura  
that Ndovazu took off
- 15    **He**  
          himself  
          [of] the *mothers*  
                    of *Ngonga*  
                            who *moves in the womb*  
                                    like a *son*  
  *Tjivanda*  
  of *Kakoto*  
  of *Nderura*
- 16    **He**  
          himself  
          with thick *nails*  
                    like a Nama  
          his sisters *say*:  
                    "Look at that little head of his"  
          while his cousins *say*:  
                    "Look at that castration of his"
- 17    ...  
          now he is in the *kraal*  
                    of theirs  
                    of their *cattle*  
                            those of Huru and Mungava  
                            those of Ngaveṭe and Kamaendo  
                            those *cows*  
                                    of Munee and *Kupenga*  
  of the *cave*  
  of Piriko  
                            those *cows*  
                                    which *hurry to the kraal*  
  like oxen  
                            those which take the eyed person  
                            and leave the blind one undisturbed
- 18    **It's him**  
          himself  
          the *chief*  
                    the *glittering*



- 19        like shadows at sunset  
           It's **him**  
               himself  
               the *chief*  
                   who *talks and answers himself*  
                                   like owls
- 20        Yes, it's **him**  
               himself  
               the *chief*  
                   who *thundered once*  
                                   and rain fell at Ongandjera

(Adapted from Kamupingene 1985:81-82, translation from Ohly 1990 and slightly edited. For difference in translations see table 5, appendix 9)

The above praise of Maharero was taken from the volume, *Ozondambo zaTjipangandjera*, edited and compiled by Kamupingene in 1985. In 1990, it was reproduced, translated and commented upon by Rajmund Ohly.

Although Kamupingene divided it into six stanzas, the author of this 'poem' is not indicated as is the case with other poems in this volume. This shows that Kamupingene may also be treating this 'poem' as a praise, rather than a modern poem. Ohly (1990) treats it as a modern poem, and that is why he (1990:25) refers to it as having "five irregular" stanzas. In this study this 'poem' is treated as a praise and patterned in accordance with the layout adopted in this study.

## **Epithet 1**

### **Maharero: he**

This pronoun *eye* 'he' is a grammatical representation of Maharero in this keyword slot. Instead of repeating the name Maharero, the oral poet replaces it with this pronoun *eye* 'he'. This technique is further discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.3.

*He: Perfume Vessel*

In this epithet the oral poet refers to 'Perfume Vessel' (a place name). Before discussing the meaning of this vessel as it is used in the praise, its use in the community needs to be clarified.

In Ovaherero culture a perfume vessel is made of wood. Certain herbs with a sweet or pleasant, delicate and distinctive fragrance are collected by women. These herbs are called *otjizumba* (Ovaherero's traditional perfume). A little of these herbs<sup>62</sup> are mixed with fat and put on a shallow hole carved in the perfume vessel. An ember is put on the herbs and some herbs are spread out on the ember. The smoke that rises gives a pleasant odour of incense.

Another instrument (*otjihanda*) made of splinters of wood in a sort of netting style is used to cover the perfume vessel. Clothes and blankets are placed over the netted instrument to catch the pleasant odour of the smoke that is emitted by the burning herbs. The function of the netted instrument is to prevent clothes and blankets from catching fire.

The allusion to the perfume vessel in this praise refers to a place or homestead called Otjipuna 'Perfume Vessel' in Windhoek. For this reason its initial vowel is written in upper case. Tjamuaha (Maharero's father) settled and lived here for several years when he was under the despotism of Jonker Afrikaner as explained above. This place was named after Tjipuna because he was the oldest man among Tjamuaha's subordinates. The description that follows the perfume vessel is a short praise of this place and of Tjipuna as well.

In this relation Maharero is identified as the one who resided or grew up at Otjipuna with his father, but no one else. Since two or more persons may have the

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<sup>62</sup> Some of these herbs are ground or crushed to a very fine powder that is used as perfuming powder (comparable to talc).

same name, the use of surnames was unknown in those days, one's praise serves as one's identity, because it differs from the praise of one's name sake. In some cases a person was directly related to his/her father, such as son/daughter of ... or the origin of his name, as the identity.

*Perfume Vessel: Hengari*

Tjipuna himself was praised as: *otjipuna tjaHengari* 'perfume vessel of Hengari' This particular perfume vessel belonged to Hengari, but the gender of Hengari is unknown. If Hengari was the mother of Tjipuna, then it is normal for her to possess a perfume vessel.

If Hengari was the father of Tjipuna, then the question may come to mind as to why a man possessed a perfume vessel? Men are only associated with perfume vessels in one of three ways as explained below.

- Men used perfume vessels for castrating rams (*okuhaha*). A perfume vessel was put underneath the scrotum of a ram and another block of wood was used to crush the testicles between the blocks. Only abandoned perfume vessels were used in this way, in the sense that the vessel was no longer used by women.
- Men used perfume as containers of sacred fat which is used at sacred shrines in various ceremonies. Again abandoned perfume vessels are used in this way.
- Men are/were carvers of perfume vessels for women.

Which intention Hengari had in mind in naming his son after a perfume vessel is unknown.

*Perfume vessel: beautiful*

This perfume vessel of Hengari is further described as having been beautiful.

Sometimes perfume vessels are/were beautified with decorations. Thus it is assumed here that Hengari's perfume was decorated with beautiful patterns.

*Perfume vessel: smoking*

In its normal use a perfume vessel is used for smoking clothes as mentioned earlier and for smoking women themselves. Women smoke themselves by placing the perfume vessel between their legs. To put it another way: they 'bathe' (*okukanga*) with the smoke emanating from burning herbs. This can be called a traditional bath, especially in those days of Maharero.

To my own experience, in some versions of Maharero's praise the phrase *tjopokati komarama* 'for between legs' is added to complement *otjikangero* 'for smoking'.

This place is included in Maharero's praise, because he grew up in this homestead. It is in this homestead that he became an experienced valiant warrior under the despotic command of Jonker Afrikaner. In those days Jonker's homestead was situated at Okongova (present Klein Windhoek).

**Epithet 2**

**Maharero: he**

The relationship between Maharero and he is the same as discussed under epithet 1 above.

*He: there*

There the demonstrative *ngo* 'that one' or 'there' is used for emphasis. The oral poet uses this word for emphatic purposes only in order to enhance the character of Maharero as THE chief or hero.

*He: son*

The oral poet links Maharero to his ancestors. The term *muna* 'son' or 'descendant of' is a contraction of *omuna* 'son' plus *wa-* 'of'. As used in the praise the initial vowel of *omuna* 'son' and the *w-* of *wa-* are elided. This contracted form is found in praises only.

In this relation the term *muna* 'son of' also carries the connotation of bravery, since Maharero is admired as the hero or valiant warrior.

*Son: Kandondo and Muheua*

The oral poet relates Maharero to Kandondo, and Kandondo to Muheua. This is just a simple genealogical relationship, but these two ancestors of Maharero cannot be traced. This is because of the extended family system of our community in which one person relates to dozens and dozens of other people. For the family tree of Maharero see appendix 7.

### **Epithet 3**

**Maharero: him**

The keyword in this epithet is preceded by the emphatic clause *ongu ri ...* 'it's ...'. Now the keyword is shifted to the object position and its form changes from subject position form *eye* 'he' to *ye* 'him'.

The clause *ongu ri ye* literally means 'it's him who is himself'. Because of the inflectional nature of Otjiherero, the relative marker *ngu* 'who' refers to third person singular or noun class 1 (in this case the noun Maharero); it indicates habitual aspect and it subordinates the following relative clause. When an *o-* is prefixed to it, then it also conveys the emphatic meaning 'it is'. In the emphatic clause *ongu ri ye* 'it's him' the *ongu* 'who' plays its triple role plus the emphatic

role, 'it's ...'. It also serves as the grammatical marker that links this emphatic clause to the pronominal keyword in the object position. This clause emphasizes or glorifies the greatness of Maharero. It is quite clear that the oral poet admires and enhances him to a higher esteem.

*Him: son*

As explained above under epithet 2.

*Son: Mutondua and Mburo*

The oral poet states that Maharero was a son of Mutondua, and Mutondua of Mburo. These ancestors of Maharero do not occur in the information at hand, thus we failed to trace the actual relationship between them and Maharero.

*Son: Tjova*

Further on, mention is made of the name Tjova. According to the tone of this epithet it seems as if Tjova was another name for Maharero or a close friend or fellow warrior with whom he was closely associated. This relation will become clearer in the explanation of the next relation below.

*Tjova: expedition*

According to an oral account narrated to me by Uaua Nderura<sup>63</sup> and others during my data collection field research Maharero accompanied a Nama expedition to Kaokoland. Presumably if Tjova was another person, then he also took part in this expedition or was indeed a prominent member of this expedition. A furious battle broke out at Otjozongombe in which the Kaoko Ovaherero killed almost all the Nama. According to him and other informants Maharero and a Nama leader

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<sup>63</sup> Interviewed at Otjiyoko, 25 September 1998.

managed to flee. There is a mountain pass that is called Mountain pass of Maharero in Otjozongombe that was named after Maharero after that battle, and he and the Nama leader fled through it. The Nama leader had a white horse and Maharero walked alongside the horse. En route Maharero shot the Nama leader and he rode back to Windhoek. Upon his arrival in Windhoek he was imprisoned on the ox wagon wheel again, since Jonker Afrikaner could not understand what he had done to survive the battle alone. It is this event to which this epithet briefly alludes.

#### **Epithet 4**

##### **Maharero: son**

As explained above under epithet 2.

*Son: Tjoruzumo, Mbemba and Jaija*

This epithet links Maharero to his maternal hierarchy as shown in his family tree under appendix 7. Here Maharero is identified as a descendant of Jaija through Mbemba and Tjoruzumo. Maharero was a son of Tjoruzumo (his mother) and she was a great granddaughter of Mbemba and Mbemba was a daughter of Jaija (Tjoruzumo's great great grandfather). According to the family tree, the oral poet skipped Tjoruzumo's mother and Tjoruzumo's grandmother. They may be deliberately skipped because they occur in epithet 9.

#### **Epithet 5**

The keyword slots of epithet 4 and 5 are filled out with the same word, *omuzandu* 'son'.

## **Maharero: son**

As explained in preceding epithets.

### *Son: weapons/sections*

The term *otumana* has become obsolete and has gone out of use, its meaning is forgotten and remains in Maharero's praise only. In Ohly (1990:25) it is translated as 'weapons', and as 'sections' in Heywood et al (1992:136). Tracing the meaning of this term synchronically, it consists of two morphemes; i.e. the noun class prefix *otu-* plus and the stem *-mana*, meaning 'finish'.

### *Weapons/sections: two*

When the term *otumana* is related to the surrounding words in this epithet, it can be genealogically understood that Maharero belonged to two sections: that of Mbondi on the one hand and that of Tjouṭuku on the other, or that Maharero had two 'weapons'; one of Mbondi and the other of Tjouṭuku. These seem to be interpretations of the translators mentioned above for the obsolete term *otumana*.

Tjouṭuku is Maharero's only paternal ancestor whose name occurs in his praise as well as his family tree in appendix 7. Consequently, given the double lineage system, we may accept that one 'weapon' or 'section' originated from the paternal lineage through the paternal ancestor Tjouṭuku. Although we failed to trace Mbondi in Maharero's maternal genealogy, we may accept him provisionally as one of his maternal ancestors since he occurs in obvious contrast to Tjouṭuku in this epithet.

This is a further interpretation of the term *otumana*. Vedder (1938:386) states that in 1869 Maharero was living at his cattle post Otumama, between Otjimbingwe and Windhoek. Thus *Otumana* might have been misspelt as *Otumama* or vice versa. The name of this place was possibly taken into Maharero's praise as is the case



with Otjipuna as explained in epithet 1. However, the question remains as to why he named this place Otumana. A correct answer to this question will aid a valid interpretation of this epithet. As this study focuses on form and meaning, and the interaction between the two, some factual questions, such as this one, will be left to further research.

### **Epithet 6**

#### **Maharero: he**

As explained in epithet 1.

*He: there*

As explained in the discussion of epithet 2.

*He: wives*

The oral poet relates Maharero to these women. He was related to them in one way or another. Thus Maharero is identified as a descendant of these women.

*Wives: Tami and Virunga*

These women to whom Maharero was related were the wives of Tami and the wives of Virunga. These wives of Tami and Virunga are not explicitly named but referred to through their husbands. It is difficult to trace their particular relationship with Maharero.

### **Epithet 7**

#### **Maharero: he**

As explained in the discussions of preceding epithets.

*He: himself*

The term *omuini* 'himself' or 'alone' is used as an admiring attribute. He is admired as a person who is amazing. This term contributes much emphatic meaning, which elevates Maharero to a higher esteem.

*He: mothers*

The concept *oonaa*... 'mothers of ...' is a complex form which consists of three constituent parts, i.e. *oo-* + *ina* 'mother' + *ya* 'of'. The *y-* of *ya* 'of' is elided and the remaining *-a-* is suffixed to *ina* 'his/her mother', and *oo-* indicates its plural form.

In Otjiherero the term *oonaa* 'mothers of' has a special meaning. In most cases when this concept is used, it conveys the meaning that what will follow is an *otjiyano* (praise of a matrilineage of one's grandfather<sup>64</sup>). Thus *otjiyano* is the basic praise of every Omuhherero, which he/she inherits from his/her grandfather as explained in section 5.2.2 above. When one hears the phrase *oonaa* ... 'mothers of ...' then it immediately triggers the notion that what follows is a praise of a matrilineage of one's grandfather.

*Mothers: Tjizu and Ndjavera*

The oral poet states that these women were the mothers of Tjizu and the mothers

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<sup>64</sup>

Every Omuhherero belongs to his/her mother's matrilineage, and simultaneously to his/her father's matrilineage and to the matrilineage of his/her grandfather as well. Therefore these questions are asked to identify an Omuhherero: *Oove omukwaye keyanda* (what is your matrilineage = what is your mother's matrilineage), *oove omunaa kwaye* 'you are a descendant of who?' (= what is your father's matrilineage) and *u yanenwa movakwaye* 'how are you praised?' (= what is your paternal grandfather's matrilineage).

of Ndjavera. Maharero's grandfather was Tjirue. This epithet consist of parts of the praise of a matrilineage to which Tjirue (Maharero's grandfather) and his mother belonged. In accordance with *otjiyano* these women were maternal ancestresses of Tjirue.

*Mothers: people*

The oral poet also refers to these women as people. In this relation the terms *oonaa* 'mothers of' and *ovandu* 'people' are equivalents as both refer to the same group of people.

*People: short*

The oral poet states that these people or mothers were short. These short people and/or mothers belonged to the same maternal group, to which Maharero was related through his grandfather, Tjirue. This coincides with Pool (1991:26) who states that Maharero was of short stature, an appearance which possibly resembles these ancestors of his.

*People: Ngava*

The short people belonged to the house or homestead of Ngava, Ngava of Tjondjo. Ngava and Tjondjo, and other individuals mentioned in this epithet probably belonged to the same matrilineage as Tjirue.

*People: Ngai and Hepo*

The names Ngai and Hepo play a double role here. First they behave as proper names and secondly as common nouns (their nominal forms are *oukaiya* and *ouhepe* respectively). As common and proper nouns they are nouns derived from verbs *okukaiya* 'to impoverish' and *okuhepa* 'to lack'. They are to a certain extent synonymous. In this sense they contribute to the meaning that these short people

were wealthy, because it is stated that they were not poor. Their significance as proper nouns are discussed below under the Hepo/mother relation.

*Hepo: mother*

Hepo as one member of the pair of Ngai and Hepo is further on identified as a mother.

*Mother: Kovimbara*

Hepo was the mother of Kovimbara who was named after palm baskets. In this relation Kovimbara was named as a proper name, but later on as a common noun in its nominal form, *ovimbara* 'palm baskets'. This common noun heads the praise of Kovimbara.

*Kovimbara: Nanda*

These palm baskets after which Kovimbara was named belonged to Nanda, but at this stage we are not sure whether Nanda was the owner or the person who made them (this becomes clearer in explanations below).

It is interesting to note here that the possessive marker *vya-* 'of' refers to the *ovi-* noun class (class 8) to which the *ovimbara* 'palm baskets' belong, but not *wa-* 'of' that refers back to the human noun class (class 1) as would be the case if it refers to the name Kovimbara.

*Palm baskets: nice and deep*

These palm baskets were beautiful and deep, which is a description of the palm baskets.

*Palm baskets: thorns and awls*

This explains how these palm baskets were made, namely with thorns as if awls were lacking. This also confirms the meanings conveyed by the proper names Ngai 'Impoverishment' and Hepo 'Lack'. These short people did not live in poverty but they made palm baskets with thorns as if they were poor. This also reinforces the idea that Nanda was rather the maker of palm baskets than the owner. In this epithet Kovimbara 'Palm Baskets' shares the same praise with the origin of his name, that is the nice and deep palm baskets of Nanda which were made with thorns.

### **Epithet 8**

#### **Maharero: he**

As explained under epithet 1.

*He: omuangu*

The kinship system (including kinship terms) in our community is very complex, and a sound understanding of it would require a detailed discussion or a separate study. For a discussion of the Ovaherero kinship system and kinship terms see Gibson (1956). Here, an attempt will be made to explain each term as it comes up in the praise under discussion.

The term *omuangu* 'younger brother' or 'younger sister' and its antonym *erumbi* 'elder brother' or 'elder sister' only relate persons of the same sex, who are siblings (descended from the same parent) or offspring of similar related parents of the same sex. Here the descendants of different parents are related to one another in the same way their parents are related.

*Younger brother: child*

Maharero was a younger brother, or cousin in English terms, to the person whose

praise is embedded by *omuatje* 'child'. This person's relationship to Maharero is explained in following relations.

*Child: Zemburuka*

The person who was the elder brother of Maharero was the child of Zemburuka.

*Child:*

This child of Zemburuka who was an *erumbi* 'elder brother' of Maharero was Zeraua. This epithet relates Maharero to Zeraua (also spelt Zeraeua as in the text), the former chief of Otjimbingwe and Omaruru. Maharero was *omuangu* 'younger brother' of Zeraua, Maharero's mother and Zeraua's mother were sisters from the same mother (Zeraua's mother was the elder sister of Maharero's mother).

Therefore, Maharero was a younger brother of Zeraua, and Zeraua was the elder brother since his mother was the oldest of the two siblings. Thus, they were brothers since their mothers were sisters. Their relationship was transferred to their sons.

*Zeraua: awl*

An *ondungo* 'awl' is a sharp instrument with which holes are made, especially when shoes or sandals are made or repaired. How Zeraua is related to or what he did with this awl, I do not know, and this is left for further research in the future.

*Awl: Rukeno*

The awl that is used in the description of Zeraua belonged to Rukeno.

*Son: Kanako*

Here Zeraua is related to one of his ancestors, Kanako.

*Son: sacred shrine*

The relation conveys the fact that Zeraua, besides being chief also had sacred status and performed rituals and ceremonies at his sacred shrine.

*Sacred shrine: goat*

During his traditional priesthood Zeraua opted for a goat as an emblem for his patrilineage. As patrilineage is closely linked to the sacred shrine, his patrilineage is known as the patrilineage of the goat and it is praised as such.

This epithet is dominated by the praise of Zeraua as embedded in the praise of his younger brother Maharero. He is praised as the child of Zemburuka of the awl of Rukeno, son of Kanako of the goat sacred shrine. Once again a praise of an individual is included into Maharero's, relating, or associating, one person with another.

## **Epithet 9**

**Maharero: him**

This epithet starts in the same way as epithet 3. The keyword occurs in the object position as it is preceded by the emphatic clause as explained under epithet 3 above. Similar discussion will not be repeated here.

Here the oral poet relates Maharero to his two grandparents who are skipped in epithet 4.

*Maharero: child*

The oral poet states that Maharero is a child in order to relate him to his two grandparents.

The oral poet states that Maharero was a child of the hut or homestead of Kandomo of Tjirongo. The possessive marker *owoya-* has double function (or meaning). This marker consists of two possessive constituent parts, i.e. *ow-* + *-oya-*. The first part refers to a noun from human noun class (class 1), i.e. *omuatje* 'child' in this case. The second part refers to a noun from the o(N)- class (class 9), i.e. either *ondjuwo* 'hut' or *onganda* 'homestead'. Because *ondjuwo* 'hut' and *onganda* 'homestead' belong to the same nominal class, it is difficult to determine whether it refers to the hut or homestead. These constituent parts concordantly agree with *omuatje* 'child' and *onganda* 'homestead' or *ondjuwo* 'hut' or 'house' respectively. This complex form links Maharero to an *ondjuwo* 'hut' or *onganda* 'homestead', and simultaneously both Maharero and *ondjuwo* 'hut' or *onganda* 'homestead' to Kandomo.

It is very rare in our culture to relate a homestead to a woman. In this case the second possessive marker is referring to Maharero's matrilineage or a sub-matrilineage, that is generally referred to as *ondjuwo* literally 'hut'. Since Kandomo was a woman, then the *ondjuwo* 'hut' is probably the correct word the possessive marker *oya-* 'of' refers to and what the oral poet had in mind when he chanted this praise.

### **Epithet 10**

#### **Maharero: he**

As explained under epithet 1.

*He: great*

Here again Maharero is admired as the great, as he often praised himself as Maharero the Great. This word also conveys an emphatic meaning, but nothing is



said to clarify why he is praised as the great one. The facts or actual information is held back and only his greatness is reinforced. Presumably, such information is held back since each and every Omuherero conventionally knows the history and his heroic deeds which are associated with Ovaherero history; or the oral poet intuitively believes that every one knows that.

*He: fathers*

Here the oral poet relates Maharero to the fathers of Uazuma and the fathers of Tjipandera. These men were related to Maharero but their names do not occur in his genealogy.

### **Epithet 11**

#### **Maharero: father**

According to Vedder (1938:326) Maharero had more than sixty wives. Thus he fathered many children, and in this light he is praised as the father of numerous people.

*Father: people*

A homestead full of people was regarded as being important and secure. Every man was compelled to marry many wives, to sire as many children as he could, preferably sons, and to attract many subjects to his homestead. Thus, sometimes the concept 'father' may mean the chief of many subjects. A good chief is often referred to as the father of his community.

In those days a large number of people was an advantage in the protection of properties, enlarging properties through raids and plunder, and in giving potential raiders a terrible fright. Such an advantage is highlighted in this epithet.

*People: numerous*

As a husband of more than sixty wives, father of his wives' children and an *omuhona* 'chief' or 'wealthy man' with many followers, his homestead was full of people.

*People: group*

A group of his numerous people undertook a heroic deed, as will be explained in the next relation. On the surface, the structure suggests that all the people in the Maharero homestead were a group, that was not the case. This relation will be clarified by the next relation.

*Group: cattle*

The oral poet states that Maharero was a father of numerous people, a group of whom tracked the cattle of Nandā and Ndjaramena, clarifying the previous relation. This group excludes women and children, because they would not have taken part in such a raid.

This relation is marked by the relative marker *mba* 'who'. It is interesting that this relative marker anaphorically refers to the nominal class *ova-* (class 2), not to *otji-* (class 7). It refers to the members of the group but not to the group itself, since the members of this group are *ovandu* 'people'.

*Cattle: trench*

This group tracked the cattle and it did not cross a trench. The clause *ai ha kakonda okarora* 'it did not cross a trench' metaphorically means that it did not go far away. The group caught up with the plunderers shortly.

In the text no mention is made of the raiders being crushed. This epithet ends at a

note leaving the following questions unanswered: what happened to the raiders? Were they crushed as in epithet 13? Did they take to their heels?

In our culture when an oral poet or narrator ends on such a note, then he tries to create an impression that the listeners (or readers) should imagine what happened next. Usually such lack of information suggests that the oral poet signals the adage: '*ape kara otja tji pe kara*' 'it happens as it ought to'. From this one may infer that the rustlers were clubbed to death. Normally when rustlers are caught they were not kept as captives or 'prisoners', but they were clubbed to death with *ozongwinya* 'knob sticks'.

### **Epithet 12**

**Maharero: he**

As explained in epithet 1.

*He: ancestors*

The words *oohokuru* 'ancestors' is a compound noun consists of *oo-* + *iho* + *ovakuru* (nominal class prefix for kinship terms (plural) + father + old). The *i-* and *ova-* are lost in the combining process. This term refers to maternal uncles of one's father.

*Ancestors: Konguari*

Konguari was one of Tjamuaha's maternal uncles. This epithet relates Maharero to his father's uncle Konguari 'Francolin' through his father. Such a relationship is realised through the use of the term *oohokuru* 'ancestors'.

*Konguari: Mutunda and Kambo*

This uncle of Tjamuaha was a descendant of Mutunda and Kambo, and he was named after the francolin of Mutunda and Kambo.

*Konguari: brown-and-white*

Similar to Kovimbara 'Palm-baskets' in epithet 7, Konguari 'Francolin' is introduced as a proper name, and then elaborated as a common noun that means a francolin. This noun *ongwari* refers either to the bird or to a cow or ox with a colour pattern resembling that of a francolin. The *ongwari* 'francolin' and *ombahiyona* 'brown-and-white' as colour patterns are to an extent similar. The colour *ongwari* is patterned with small white spots on a brown or brownish background, the *ombahiyona* are white large patches on a brown background. Therefore some people who do not know these patternings well, used to use these colour patternings interchangeably. In this relation this francolin pattern is referred to as a brown-and-white patterning.

*Konguari: francolin*

This is a repetitive elaboration, since the name is repeated as a common noun. This relation is placed between the proper and the common noun, with the common noun modifying the proper noun. The only difference between the proper and common noun is the *k-* that serves as the initial consonant of the proper noun.

*Francolin: beautiful*

This indicates that this cow or ox of francolin colour was beautifully patterned.

*Francolin: sound*

This bird and the francolin coloured cattle both made a high-pitched sound, and both share a similar colour as well. According to Ovaherero this would have sounded well, but because of its high pitch it is bad. Some Ovaherero favour cows

or oxen which make a nice lowing rather than a high pitched.

This epithet is dominated by the praise of Konguari who, as an individual, was praised in this way. This praise of his name suggests that it was associated with a particular cow which had a colour pattern similar to that of the francolin and that made a high pitched sound also like the francolin, after which he was named.

The relation is marked by the relative marker *ndja* 'that/which' and a coordinating connective *nu* 'but'. The *nu* 'but' coordinates the two relative clauses as of equal status, and also expresses the contrast between these relative clauses, i.e. normal nice sound vs the too high pitched sound.

### **Epithet 13**

This epithet consists of two main information units; his physical description and his success or heroic deed.

#### **Maharero: he**

As explained under epithet 1.

*He: belly*

According to this information Maharero had a large belly (or tummy) that hung downwards and had a shadow.

The term *omberipa* means a woman who has had at least one child. After her pregnancy her belly stretches and thrusts out, and becomes much larger than it had been previously. Her belly does not protrude but hangs down loosely.

The similarity between Maharero and *omberipa* 'a mother' is drawn through a simile, Maharero as tenor and a mother as vehicle. Through this simile the oral

poet intends to show that Maharero had a large belly that hung downwards like a mother's.

Further on, one may ask: why does the oral poet use concepts such as shadow and night? Usually an Omuherero woman would be shy. It would be almost impossible to see the whole of her belly clearly. One would see her belly during the night when she leaves the hut to relieve herself, and a human figure in darkness is similar to a shadow. Thus a woman figure in darkness equals Maharero's shadow. The comparison of these two forms creates a vivid description of the appearance of Maharero's belly. In other words the oral poet here compares the images instead of comparing the persons themselves, because shapes are much more similar than the persons themselves actually are.

*He: cattle*

As already mentioned, raids and plunder were the order of the day during Maharero's youth and reign. Here he was told to track the cattle which were raided. The verb *okuteza* 'track' is not mentioned here, but the clause is translated with track(ing) in order to make sense in English.

The relative clause *ngwa ri p...* 'who was at ...' generally means that he did something. What exactly he did will be discussed in the next relation below.

*Cattle: Hukununa of Tando and Kamutikirua*

A certain Hukununa of Tando and Kamutikirua raided Tjamuaha's cattle (Maharero's father's cattle).

The clause *ngwa ri pozongombe zaHukununa waTando na Kamutikirua* 'who tracked the cattle of Hukununa of Tando and Kamutikirua' is ambiguous. At first sight, one may assume that these cattle belonged to Hukununa, but in fact these were Tjamuaha's cattle that Hukununa drove away. A second ambiguity, it is hard

to determine whether Tando and Kamutikirua were parents of Hukununa or Hukununa and Kamutikirua were partners who raided Tjamuaha's cattle. For example Hukununa of (Tando and Kamutikirua) or Hukununa (of Tando) and Kamutikirua.

Contrary to the information in this epithet, Kaputu (1992c:72-3) states that Tjamuaha's cattle were driven off by Tjivena son of Hukununa. According to the praise the raider was Hukununa himself but not his son.

Further on Kaputu (1992c:73) remarks that Tjamuaha took a spear and wanted to track his cattle, but a certain Kamunguma son of Kaimu dissuaded him from tracking. He told him to go back and marry many wives to bear many children because he did not have many people in those days to assist him in tracking rustlers. After that Tjamuaha married ten wives. This shows that this event took place before Maharero was born.

However, this epithet states that these cattle were tracked by Maharero. Whether the cattle were those that Maharero tracked or whether the event alluded to in this epithet was a later one in which Hukununa himself partook is difficult to determine on the basis of the information at hand.

If Kaputu (1992c) and the praise refer to the same event, then it can be interpreted as follows. When Tjamuaha arrived at his homestead he did not find the cattle at home. Maharero, his son, tracked them, caught up with them, crushed the raiders and brought them back on the one hand. It might be that Tjamuaha deceived Kamunguma who tried to persuade him and made as if he were going back. Out of Kamunguma's sight he tracked his cattle, caught up with them, smashed the raiders single handedly and drove his cattle back. This event might be included in Tjamuaha's praise, as it is common for one praise to take up parts of another praise. Thus part of Tjamuaha's praise might have been taken up into Maharero's praise. In fact it is Tjamuaha who deserved to be praised as such if this were to be the case.

If the praise refers to the event in which Hukununa (or maybe his son) was the culprit, then it is clear that Maharero tracked the cattle, and he deserved to be praised as such.

*Cattle: tobacco*

The clause 'crushed them in hands like tobacco' is ambiguous. This relation is syntactically constructed in such a way to indicate Maharero crushed the cattle, but in fact he crushed the rustlers. The act of crushing is compared to the crushing of tobacco in one's palm. In those days people used to grow tobacco plants. The leaves were harvested and spread out to dry after which they were crushed in one's palm, put in a pipe and smoked. This simile and the tone of the praise suggest that the rustlers were not shot, but clubbed to death with knobkerries<sup>65</sup> or bludgeons.

**Epithet 14**

Similar to the preceding epithet, this one consists of two main information units, a description of Maharero's physical appearance and an allusion to one of his numerous heroic deeds.

**Maharero: he**

As explained in epithet 1.

*He: thin-legged*

The physical description is clear and explicit, he had lean legs. It is possible he was bandy-legged as well, but because he was a chief some information might be withheld.

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<sup>65</sup> A knobkerrie (or bludgeon or club) is a heavy stick with a thick end or knob or head used as a weapon. It is/was a famous and handy weapon among Ovaherero, specifically in olden times.



*He: praise*

The clause *ngu tenga okuyana* 'who praises first' means that he came first in most (if not all) competitions or manly encounters. If someone hits the mark first in shooting, then he proudly chants a praise of his paternal grandfather's matrilineage (*otjiyano*), as mentioned previously. This is a kind of self-praise one inherits from one's grandfather's matrilineage, as briefly explained in chapter 5, section 5.2.2.

'One who praises first' means that he always hits the mark(s) first. Therefore this clause denotes his proficiency and success in shooting. In other words he excelled over others in hitting targets. Their targets in this case were enemies and/or wild animals during raids, plunder, wars and hunting. This simply means that he was a competent shooter who was always marked out for success in shooting, an art and destiny he succeeded in, particularly during and after Jonker Afrikaner's despotism. This distinctive personality of his indirectly forced Jonker Afrikaner to appoint him to a leadership position in his regiment.

*He: son*

In Otjiherero the concept *omuzandu* 'son' is synonymous with bravery since bravery is considered to be synonymous with masculinity. The manly qualities were the desire of every young man or of every parent for his/her son in those days. Therefore the term *omuzandu* 'son' in the context of this praise is used to mean that Maharero was a valiant warrior, as also explained in epithet 4.

*Son: cattle*

One of the numerous heroic deeds derived from his bravery is that he was THE man who drove the cattle in the way they should have been driven, like a man.

*Cattle: Omange*

He drove these cattle to Omenge.

*Cattle: son*

How could one drive cattle through a person? The term *omuzandu* 'son' here has a different connotation. Here, however, the word represents a place since it starts a praise of that place. This means that he drove these cattle via a place in which a handsome son of Hoke and Mbetjiura was buried. The name of the place praised here is not mentioned.

*Son: good looking and cattle*

The son or man who was buried in this place was good looking and the display of the oxen's horns on his grave was also beautifully done.

As already explained, a decorous display of horns of oxen are used to decorate a grave of a highly respected man. Such ceremonial display was made on the grave of this good looking man. This display looked nice on his grave, but to say that it looked nice is to accept death as being nice. Therefore the oral poet says it, and later says that saying it is not a good thing, since saying it equals despising the deceased and accepting death as being good.

*Son: Kazeri*

The name of the person whose corpse is resting in that grave is revealed as Kazeri.

*Kazeri: leopard*

As usual, the praise of Kazeri is included here, and he is praised as Kazeri of Nambura's leopard which Ndovazu had taken.

Our traditional military uniform<sup>66</sup> consisted of an *ohako* (a cloak made of a leopard skin) and *ondjenge* (a cap made of jackal's skin with its tail hanging downwards at the back or plume made of, or decorated with, ostrich feathers that wave wildly in the breeze). Such a uniform was usually worn by exceptionally brave warriors. Thus the term *ongwe* 'leopard' in this praise refers to the uniform rather than the animal in the flesh. Kazeri, the deceased, inherited this uniform from Nambura, and Ndovazu later had it. Whether Ndovazu took it from him while Kazeri was alive or inherited it from him remains unclear.

Two praises are embedded in this epithet: the praise of the place through which Maharero drove the cattle and the praise of Kazeri, the person who was buried in that place.

#### **Epithet 15**

This epithet is very similar to epithet 7.

#### **Maharero: he**

As discussed under epithet 1.

*He: himself*

As explained under epithet 7.

*He: mothers*

As explained under epithet 7.

*Mothers: Ngonga*

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<sup>66</sup> See Vedder (1938:344).

These mothers are identified as the mothers of Ngonga. According to Kaputu (1992a:4) Tjirue's mother was Katazuma, daughter of Kangonga. In this praise Kangonga is named as Ngonga, a common practice among Ovaherero to prefix *ka-* to personal names, for instance some people called or referred to Maharero as Kamaharero. This *ka-* is linguistically considered to be a proper name marker. Thus Kangonga was the grandmother of Tjirue (grandfather of Maharero). As explained under epithet 7, this is one of Maharero's *oviyano* (praises in accordance with his lineages, but in this case according to the praise of his grandmother herself). The praise of Maharero's grandmother is included in his.

*Ngonga: movement*

According to the praise Ngonga or Kangonga moved in her mother's womb. Her movement in the womb may be interpreted as something that prophesied her bravery in the future.

*Movement: male*

The movement of Ngonga in her mother's womb is compared to the movement of a man named Tjivanda of Kakoto of Nderura. It is believed that the male foetuses move more freely in their expectant mothers' wombs. A movement which is believed to signal bravery in the future, and bravery is, thus, expected from such a child in the future. Presumably Ngonga was as brave as a man as she was foretold to be by her movement in her mother's womb. Accordingly, it may be inferred that the bravery of Ngonga was genetically transferred to Maharero (her fifth grandson). It is a normal practice in praises to take up one's parent's or grandparent's praise in one's own praise.

**Epithet 16**

**Maharero: he**

As explained under epithet 1.

*He: himself*

As explained under epithet 7.

*He: nails*

This epithet depicts Maharero's physical appearance. It gives a description of his physique.

In this epithet the oral poet highlights Maharero as having protruding fingernails like a Nama for whom fingernails that jut out is a typical characteristic. This is conveyed by a compound noun *ozondundunyara* which consists of *ozo(N)* + \*-*dundu* or *tundu* 'heap' + *ozonyara* 'nails'.

*He: sisters and cross cousins*

The concept *ovaramwe* refers to cross cousins only. This relation consists of lines that are parallelistically structured. These lines deal with the socio-cultural position of Maharero in the community. There is a corresponding kinship term in each line: *ovaṭena* 'sisters' and *ovaramwe* 'cross cousins'. The term *ovaṭena* in our extended family system refers to a sister-brother or brother-sister relationship, a relationship between siblings of different sexes. *Ovaṭena* indicates the relationship between the sexually different siblings, sexually different offspring of sisters and sexually different offspring of brothers, that is they descended from the same parent or parents with the same sex.. *Ovaramwe* refers to one's cross cousins only, without making any sexual distinction. *Ovaramwe* are just the opposite: they are descended from parents of opposite sex. Such as the offspring of a sister and her brother, or half-sister and those of her half-brother.

Marriages among cross cousins are permitted and much favoured and for this

reason the use of terms that refer to one's genitals or private parts are only permitted among *ovaramwe* 'cross cousins', when they are used for fun in the absence of adults and *ovaṭena* 'sisters-brothers' or by adult cross cousins in the absence of *ovaṭena* 'sisters-brothers' and children.

In this epithet Maharero's cross cousins address him jokingly as having a castrated scrotum as a term of avoidance for his circumcised penis. The term *ombindiro* literally 'castrated scrotum' is used to refer to the castrated scrotum of a male animal, but men are circumcised, they are not castrated, and the term thus refers indirectly to the circumcised penis.

The term *okarunga* as used in this epithet is translated with 'head', but the actual meaning of the word is small roundness. This is the term that is used by *ovaṭena* 'sisters' of Maharero to address him. This is because sisters and brothers are not permitted to refer to each other by terms referring to private parts or to mention any term that refers to these parts in the presence of one another. For this reason the term *okarunga* is so obscure as if it were referring to his 'small round head'. It is possible that both castration and small roundness refer to the round head of his circumcised penis, but avoidance in the latter is more obscure than in the former.

Wearing our traditional skin clothes or aprons, one's private parts are easily exposed, especially male genitals. This is an indication that Maharero at one time or another dressed himself traditionally.

### **Epithet 17**

This is the only epithet in this praise with an empty keyword slot.

### **Maharero: kraal**

Vedder (1938:327) remarks that Tjamuaha was buried at the entrance of his cattle kraal. When Maharero died he was laid to rest alongside his father.

The praise talks as if Maharero were still alive and inside the kraal, but in fact it refers to his grave.

The marker *otje* in the clause *nao otje ri ...* 'now he is however ...' plays the important role of linking Maharero as the referent with this epithet. *Otje* consists of *otji* 'however' or 'then' + *e* 'he'. The *-e* is translated with 'he' because of its anaphoric reference to the referent. In the absence of a subject or pronoun as a subject, the class marker stands firm as an informal representative of the subject, informal because it can be used together with the noun or pronoun. In the presence of the noun or pronoun it serves as a referential marker (referring to the class to which the noun belongs), as a marker of number (singular or plural) and as a tense marker. Therefore in the absence of a noun or pronoun in the keyword slot, this class marker informally represents anything that might have been put into this slot, because it refers back to the noun class of the referent itself. The representative function of the class marker as an 'occupier' of the keyword slot is realised at the underlying semantic level. At the syntactic level the keyword slot is clearly empty.

*Kraal: their*

The oral poet states that he is now in their kraal in which he was buried, because he was buried alongside his father (Tjamuaha) at the entrance of his kraal.

*Kraal: cattle*

It is obvious that when someone refers to a kraal then one means the kraal of one's cattle. The oral poet here deliberately adds this relation because he wants to praise these cattle in the following relations in which the praise of these cattle is related to various ancestors.

*Cattle: Huru and others*

These cattle were praised as belonging to Huru and Mungava, Ngaveje and

Kamaendo.

To understand why these cattle were praised as such, an attempt should be made to find out how Maharero was genealogically or socially related to the individuals mentioned here.

Vedder (1938:142) states that Tjamuaha

"sent a message to his friend, Tjipangandjara, who lived in the Sandveld and begged him to transfer to him some of his numerous followers. Presumably he wanted to use them for the purpose of enriching himself by forcibly despoiling other wealthy cattle owners. Tjipangandjara sent him back the reply that he required his people for himself, but he was sending his friend a number of oxen as a present; with these he could buy wives and breed children of his own, and then he could soon build up a tribe again, which would not leave him in the lurch, as so many of his people had done when they saw that his father, Tjirue, was reduced to poverty. Tjamuaha accepted the oxen, acted upon his friend's advice, and achieved some measure of success".

According to Kaputu (1992b:52) Ngaveṭe and Kamaendo occur in Tjipangandjara's genealogy. Linking Kaputu's to Vedder's information one may come to a conclusion that Tjipangandjara's ancestors were taken up in the praise of Maharero's (or Tjamuaha's) cattle because Tjamuaha used Tjipangandjara's advice to acquire them. That is, Tjamuaha married many wives and sired many children who helped him in raiding cattle. Therefore these cattle were praised as having originated from raids in accordance with the advice of a descendant of Ngaveṭe and Kamaendo.

*Cattle: cows*

The oral poet states that these cattle were cows which originated from the specific cattle.

*Cows: Munee and Kupenga*



These cows are further on praised as having belonged to Munee and Kupenga, Kupenga of the cave of Piriko.

Kaputu (1992b:57) is of the opinion that Maharero married a mother of his two sons, Hijatjize and Hijandami who were nephews of Munee of Kupenga. In accordance with our customs, secular properties should be inherited by nephews. Presumably, Maharero's sons inherited their uncle's cattle and brought them to their father homestead, and Maharero's cattle or cattle in Maharero's homestead came to be praised in that way. Or it might be that Maharero himself was related to Munee of Kupenga in one way or another, which is also possible given the extended family system of Ovaherero.

*Cattle: cows*

Further on these cattle are praised as cows that hurry to the kraal like oxen. The cows are/were usually milked twice a day: in the morning and evening. When milking time approaches, then the cows rush to the kraal to meet their calves. This rushing to the kraal is compared to the rushing of oxen.

One may ask: why are cows compared to oxen as oxen are not milked or do not need to go to the calves' enclosure? The answer to this question lies in the oxen sport<sup>67</sup>.

In the past oxen were trained a kind of 'game'. A man whistled to attract their attention, made thumping sounds on the ground with his feet, ran and the oxen followed him. Competitions between oxen of different homesteads were organised, normally after a hot debate: 'Our oxen will outrun yours.' Normally oxen run faster

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<sup>67</sup> *Okukurirwa* means to be chased around. For well trained and experienced oxen this was a fascinating 'game' to be played with them. Such a practice is well known in Kaokoland. When people moved from one place to another cattle were moved in this way, a person runs in front while the oxen follow until he could not keep up with the pace of the oxen. Then he runs alongside or behind them while praising them.

than a man, thus the man had to run alongside or behind the oxen, while praising them, especially the ox(en) that was/were in front when they passed him. Praising specific oxen was common practice during these competitions.

In this praise the running of the cows to the kraal is compared to the running of oxen during this game by using an onomatopoeic word *ombambarera*<sup>68</sup>. The term resembles the *mba...mba...mba* or *pa...pa...pa* thumping sound that is made by the hoofs of running animals.

*Cows: blind*

The last clause of this epithet reads that these cows knock over one who sees and leaves the blind person undisturbed. This means that in their rush they could trample down a person who could see and yet leave a blind person undisturbed. This is a characteristic of cattle in general. When a person stands quietly, without making any movement, in the way of the running cattle, they run and pass him without knocking him over. When a person hesitates and becomes frightened and tries to dodge the cattle, he will be easily knocked over. In this sense, if somebody is blind he will not move and will be left undisturbed but someone, with sight who tries to dodge the cattle, will be knocked over.

### **Epithet 18**

This epithet is patterned in a similar way to epithet 3, 9, 18, 19 and 20 in which the keyword is placed in the object position, and preceded by the emphatic clause as explained in epithet 3.

**Maharero: him**

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<sup>68</sup> *Ombambarera* is a noun derived from a verb stem *-pambara* that means keep on knocking or knocking continuously.

As explained under epithet 3.

*Maharero: chief*

At this point it is now clear that Maharero was rich and a chief. As already explained in section 5.2, the concept *omuhona* combines these traits. It also reinforces the over-emphasized glorification of Maharero as the chief and simultaneously the hero.

*Maharero: glittering*

Here the oral poet states that Maharero glittered like shadows at sunset. When the sun sets, its rays gleam and a brownish glancing colour is seen. According to the praise Maharero's skin displayed such a colour. Whether Maharero really looked like that or whether it was just a fabrication to glorify him, cannot be ascertained. According to Pool (1991:26) however Maharero had a dark skin colour, probably a dark shining skin colour.

## **Epithet 19**

**Maharero: him**

As explained under epithet 3.

*Maharero: himself*

As explained under epithet 7.

*Maharero: chief*

As explained under epithet 18.

*Chief: answer*

In this epithet the oral poet describes the personality of Maharero that he spoke and answered himself. This epithet says more than merely answering himself. Presumably it describes his prayer at the *okuruwo* 'sacred shrine' where the priest prays and intercedes with his ancestors or sometimes through them to Ndjambi<sup>69</sup> for his followers. After he has asked for everything, he and his followers desire, such as good luck, rain and so forth, he himself affirms his prayers as if it were the ancestors who answer, like owls do.

*Answer: owls*

Maharero's prayer-answering style is compared to the sound made by owls during the night. At night owls make a sound that consists of a repetition of two tunes, where the second sounds as if it answers the first one.

## **Epithet 20**

**Maharero: him**

As explained under epithet 3, but the addition of 'yes' needs an explanation. The occurrence of 'yes' may be interpreted in the following two ways. Firstly, if the 'yes' is an imitation of Maharero's self-answering habit as explained in the preceding epithet, then it belongs to epithet 19. On the other hand if it were to be interpreted as having an emphatic meaning, that means 'yes, indeed or truly ...', then it belongs to this epithet. Thus it is classified into this epithet, since it seems to me to be the more appropriate interpretation.

*Maharero: himself*

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<sup>69</sup> Ndjambi is the Almighty Creator of everything, similar to the God of Christianity.

As explained under epithet 3.

*Maharero: chief*

As explained in epithet 18.

*Chief: thunder*

Here the oral poet alludes to a hand-made cannon which was made by the Ovaherero in 1867 after the Nama attacked them at Otjimbingwe. As far as this event is concerned, Vedder (1938:357) quotes Brincker (1896) as follows:

"Then some enterprising individual conceived the idea of making a cannon. They got hold of a thick tree trunk to which a pump had been fixed, and the blacksmith put a number of bands round it, and so on. Then the terrible shot had to be fired. One of the colonists stuck the lint on the end of a long reed, and held it to the touch-hole. An alarming crackling took place and then the cannon went up into the air in hundreds of pieces; there never was such a bang before. Everybody ran home as hard as they possibly could."

The purpose of this was to scare the Nama away from where they were camped nearby, so that they would not dare to attack Otjimbingwe again.

To Ovaherero's ears such a strange bang sounded similar to the thunder caused by lightning, and could be heard far away. The bang of the cannon might have been heard at Ongandjera<sup>70</sup>, a place that is some two hundred kilometres away from Otjimbingwe.

In this praise this terrible sound of the cannon was associated with thunder. When lightning thunders in Otjimbingwe then it probably rains in Ongandjera, that simply means that when it thunders at Otjimbingwe it can be heard at Ongandjera. This

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<sup>70</sup> This place may not be confused with Ongandjera in Ovamboland. This place is situated to the south east of Okahandja, south of Oviombo. See map in Pool (1991:207), but it is spelt as Ongandjira. It is the place known as Okandjira today.

event was taken up into Maharero's praise because it happened during his reign as a military leader and as a paramount chief as well.

The oral poet talks as if it was Maharero himself who thundered once and the rain fell at Ongandjera. This also reinforces the fact that Maharero was the most powerful chief of all Ovaherero chiefs. Furthermore, it emphasizes their trust in, admiration and glorification of Maharero as the 'Great' in all respects.

Because of the fact that he also inherited the sacred shrine as a priest after his father's death in 1861, he was considered as having superhuman and supernatural powers; i.e. he could 'thunder' and rain could fall. This is actually a transformation of his military power to superhuman and supernatural power. His superiority to the Nama is glorified and transformed into superiority to natural phenomena.

In relation to epithets 18 and 19 which are shaped similarly to this epithet, the 'thunder' information can be metaphorically interpreted as the way in which he gave his commands as military leader as well as paramount chief. When he 'thundered' his commands the whole community obeyed. In other words a metaphor in which thunder may be interpreted as commands, and rain that fell as a community who obeyed.

## 10.4 LINEAGES

### Ovakwatjivi matrilineage (J. A. Kaputu)

According to oral accounts or myth Mukuatjivi was the founder ancestress of this matrilineage. It is narrated that Mukuatjivi was born of a poor family and she was married to a wealthy man.

In those days the Ovaherero used to gather leaves and stems of *ombowa*, a certain plant that grows in old gardens or abandoned kraals. This *ombowa* was pounded and pressed into cakes. These cakes were dried and stored for later use. A dry cake is called *evanda* or *ongaha*. In wealthy families, the cakes are stewed in butter fat while poor families stewed their cakes in water.

One day Mukuatjivi went to visit her parents. When she was there she saw how her mother was stewing cakes in water. She said: "At our homestead cakes are still stewed in water", meaning that her parents are still poor. This made her mother furious because she felt insulted, and she rejected her for this insult. Her mother promised not to see her again for she despised her.

Before this rejection Mukuatjivi belonged to the Ekweyuva matrilineage. After this she was known as the *omukazendu wotjivi* 'the woman of bad luck' or 'misfortune'. From that day Mukuatjivi 'Badluck' or 'Misfortune' replaced her real name. What her real name was before that, nobody knows. Her descendants are known as Ovakwatjivi 'children of Misfortune', and are praised as follows:

- 1     **Ovandu**  
          mbe yarwa ave riri  
          mbe hurwa ave tey' evango
- 2     **Oohokuru Rukongo**  
          rwaKondjupa  
              yaUazerura  
              ondjupa  
                  ongweyupa

ndji ve ha nu aza tjindi  
ngaze tur' *ave notjitata*  
aayo oruhere

3 **Oohokuru Tjiteo**

tjaRukoze  
na Tjiteo  
tjaKaparanga  
*omband'*  
onene  
ndja ri kewe  
rooKahei na Kaparanga

4 **OoKatana**

kaMukumangua  
na Katana  
kamukaa  
Tjombe  
*mama*  
naa  
Keurumba  
ndja nuka  
*yombanda*  
yaMutjise  
yamukaa  
Hamuningire

5 **OoMbahimua**

yaTjikuzu  
*karuru*  
kaKavango  
*hembonde*  
yomeho  
na *hembonde*  
yomupotu  
*Kanand'*  
otjirangaranga  
ngu ma ire ko kewe  
raMbondi  
yaMuandjiva

6 **Ovandu**

mbe urir' *Okakundu*  
*omisema*  
vyaNakaundu  
ovandu  
ovengi nozongombe  
zao  
morupanda  
mbu mave hungire inyangi *Hijauarungond'*  
okavi



waMuniozondumb'  
otjironda

7 **Ovanatje**

vaKancaviria

mama *Tjara*

tjaKandombo

omusuko

waRutjindo

wooKoviti

vyozongava nozosuve

mbi ri Handangombe

mbi hana mutenya

ngurova avi ongareke

owa ku kwa ir' omundu

8 **Ovasya**

yondende

yaKavirongo

*Tjeinja*

yaKavirongo

ngu ma tja:

"Ovandu ve ʔa uriri kave huurwa"

omutwezu

wovita mbi ha yanda

ngwa tjirwa pOngueru

omuatje

waKondū

yaNambungu

yaTjikeketa

ohona

yozondu

ngwa kavira kongoro

yOvatjawana

indji Mboki

yaKavirongo

ingwi ngwa ender' okuyekuyeur' *onganda*

yainyangwe m*Oviombo*

*ongombe*

yaTjizu

wekori

reinya

omuzandu

*hi*

yaKatjimunge

9 **Ovasya**

va*Hi*

yaKungairi

wengondo

rovari novarire  
ndi ri *ondana*  
     yaKaritjit'  
     ongongoro  
wondindisengo  
     oondwezu  
omuingona  
ngwa nin' *otjiryo*  
     tjongombe  
         yaMapa  
         yaMaor'  
         ongondjoza  
         *onyama e ha ri ko*  
             e ri pondikwa potjivereko  
ngwa kwaterwa *kombwa*  
         yaKauzuuo  
         yaNangava  
         omukururume  
         ndji *ha ri seranyama*  
             ozombw' ozongwao aza ry'  
             oseranyama

10   **Ovasya**

va*Kairi*  
         ngwa ri *nomasa norupati*  
             onyati

11   **Ovasya**

va*Tjiparu*  
         tjondjuwo  
             yarukaza  
                 Ngotue

12   **Ovasya**

va*Hirarapi*  
         womuramba  
             wozongowa  
             nu mbu hi namakweero  
             mbu ri *ondemba*  
                 yaNdjunga  
                 yaNaori  
                 yaKatjavare  
                 ndji mai tja:  
                     "Wararara"  
                     aayo *omaihi*  
                         wondukwa *mona*  
                             mwa rar'  
                                 ovaenda

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waMuniozondjira  
mama  
inaa  
 Kaeru  
ngu ma tja:  
 “Hi tjene hi mbura nu mbi tirirwa tjike”  
omutwezu  
omundu  
e ri *Katjingauri*  
waTjiponda  
yombanda  
yaKaura  
yamukaa  
 Ngoma  
ngwa ri ponganda  
yahi  
yaKotjimbumba  
 tjozongomb’  
ozombaranga  
 muhuka a kara ponganda  
yaMungunda  
waKujambera  
kwaNdjamo  
indji yongundwe  
yomuinyo  
we

- 
- 1     The **people**  
        who weep when hated  
        who broke a hipbone when loved  
 2     The **ancestors** *Rukongo*  
        of *Kondjupa*  
        of Uazerura  
        the *calabash*  
            the sacred  
            that is not drunk while in migration  
            when they settle *it is drunk, soup*  
                               like porridge  
 3     The **ancestors** *Tjiteo*  
        of Rukoze  
        and *Tjiteo*  
        of Kaparanga  
        the *valiant*  
            big  
            that is on the *stone*  
                               of Kahei and Kaparanga  
 4     **Katana**

- of Mukumangua  
and *Katana*  
of the wife  
of Tjombe  
*my mother*  
the *mother*  
of Keurumba  
that *smelt*  
of the *cloth*  
of Mutjise  
of the wife  
of Hamuningire
- 5     **Mbahimua**  
of *Tjikuzu*  
the *ghost*  
of Kavango  
*piebald*  
with eyes  
and *piebald*  
the blind [one]  
*Kananda*  
the ignorant  
who excretes on the *stone*  
of *Mbondi*  
of Muandjiva
- 6     **The people**  
who were full in the *Okakundu*  
the *sand-wells*  
of Nakaundu  
people  
many  
with *cattle*  
of theirs  
in the homestead  
who were spoken of by uncle *Hijauarungondo*  
the ugly  
of *Muniozondumbo*  
the climber
- 7     **The children**  
of *Kanaviria*  
mother *Tjara*  
of Kandombo  
the *daughter*  
of *Rutjindo*  
of *Koviti*  
of the rhinoceroses and trees  
that are with Handangombe

that separate during the day  
and gather in the evening  
as if herded by someone

8 The nephews

of the warrior

of Kavirongo

Tjeinja

of Kavirongo

who is saying:

"People are killed but not captured"

the bull

with endless wars

who spent the morning at Ongueru

the son

of Kondu

of Nambunga

of Tjikeketa

the chief

of the sheep

who rode the zebra

of Ovatjawana

that is Mboki

of Kavirongo

who came to rescue the homestead

of his-uncle in Oviombo

cattle

of Tjizu

brave

with the hat

with a feather

the father

of Katjimunge

9 The nephews

of Father

of Kungairi

of the black-bush

of new mothers and weepers

that is with the calf

of Karitjita

the dark brown and white

with a thick neck

like a bull

the favourite

who swallowed the limb

of the ox

of Mapa

of Maore

- for the funeral  
while *he didn't eat meat*  
while he was on a carrying skin  
who was born at the *dog*  
of Kauzuuo  
of Nangava  
the old  
that *does not eat red meat*  
while other dogs eat red meat
- 10     The **nephews**  
          of *Kairi*  
                  who *had strength in a rib*  
                                  like a buffalo
- 11     The **nephews**  
          of *Tjiparu*  
                  of the *wife*  
                          of Ngotue
- 12     The **nephews**  
          of *Hirarapi*  
                  of the *valley*  
                          with millstones  
                          but without mills  
                          which is with the *spotted [ox]*  
                                  of Ndjunga  
                                  of Naori  
                                  of Katjavare  
                          that is saying:  
                                  *"Wararara"*  
  like the *butter- calabash*  
  where guests slept
- the wet-mouthed  
          who was born and known  
                                  at their *[homestead]*  
  at the *Mujoro's [homestead]*  
  of Kapanda  
  of the *neck*  
  of a bull
- 13     The **nephews**  
          of Kangombe
- 14     The **nephews**  
          of *Kamurondu*  
                  of Kahiha  
                  with *generosity*  
                          like that of Katuusira  
                  of the *chief*  
                          of Nehova  
                          the *generous*

excessive

- 15     The **nephews**  
          of Katjihenda  
              of the war-hat  
                  of Muinjo
- 16     The **nephews**  
          of Kahitjene  
              of Muhoko and Mbungu  
                                of Kezeva  
          the *Omuambo*  
              of Kahumba  
                  of Koviti  
          with the shoe  
          who crossed the *springbok*  
                                of Kombango  
                                with the cloth  
  of Kauvari on his back  
          the *black [man]*  
              like the shadows at sunset  
          the *shining [chief]*  
              like the rock smeared with fat  
          who moves muscle on the neck  
                                like Kemenje's [son]  
          he gaits as he walks  
          he chirps as he speaks  
          the *bad-speaker*  
              of ours  
              of Kapeeua  
              with an arm  
                                with a hook  
          who was seen by the *wife*  
                                of Muniozondjira  
                                the *mother*  
  of Kaeru  
          who is saying:  
              "I don't flash I am not rain how do I terrify people"  
          the bull  
          the *person*  
              who is *Katjingauri*  
                                of Tjiponda  
                                of the cloth  
  of Kaura  
  of the wife  
  of Ngoma  
          who was at the *homestead*  
                                of the father  
  of Kotjimbumba



of the *cattle*  
 wide-horned  
 the next day he was at the *homestead*  
of *Mungunda*  
of *Kujambera*  
of *Ndjamo*  
that of *his-uncle*  
of *life*  
of *his*

(Transcribed from a tape from the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, my translation)

### Epithet 1

#### Ovakwatjivi: people

In this relation the term *ovandu* 'people' means specifically the members of this matrilineage.

#### *People: rejection & cry*

Among Ovakwatjivi there are beautiful women. When their lovers end their relationships or when they are rejected, they weep.

#### *People: love & hipbone*

When they are loved, they break the hipbones of their lovers. Breaking a hipbone is a proverbial expression that means to be unable to move. This expression figuratively means that when they are loved, their lovers do not want to part from them for even a short period of time, because of passion or overwhelming love which causes weeping when the relationship breaks up. This characteristic description became a feature considered peculiar to Ovakwatjivi women.

## Epithet 2

### Ovakwatjivi: ancestors

In this relation the oral poet relates members of this matrilineage to their maternal ancestral relatives. When the term *oohokuru* literally 'old fathers' is used in praises, then it refers to the praise that is normally given to the grandchildren of the male members of the particular matrilineage. This praise serves as a common identity for the grandchildren from the members of the same matrilineage.

#### *Ancestors: Rukongo*

In this relation the oral poet uses the term *oohokuru* 'ancestors' in its plural form<sup>71</sup>, but followed by one name only. This suggests that ancestor Rukongo was one of the numerous ancestors or uncles of this matrilineage. Thus the phrase *oohokuru Rukongo* means ancestor Rukongo and others (or his company of other ancestors of this matrilineage).

#### *Rukongo: Kondjupa*

The oral poet relates Rukongo to one of his parents called Kondjupa meaning 'Calabash'. Kondjupa was named after a particular calabash, as explained in the relation below.

#### *Calabash: Uazerura*

The calabash after which Kondjupa 'Calabash' was named belonged to Uazerura. How Kondjupa was related to Uazerura is not known.

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<sup>71</sup> This *oohokuru* 'ancestors' is the plural form of *hokuru* 'ancestor'. See appendix 1 noun class 2a and 1a respectively.

### *Calabash: calabash*

In this relation the oral poet repeats the word *ondjupa* 'calabash' as a common noun to modify the proper name Kondjupa 'Calabash'. The common noun heads its praise or description in which the oral poet touches in passing on the origin of the proper name Kondjupa. The description of this calabash is explained in the next relations.

### *Calabash: sacredness*

This calabash is described as a sacred calabash. In Ovaherero culture, a calabash is sacred when it is used for curdling the milk of sacred cattle. Thus a sacred calabash is closely associated with specific sacred cattle.

### *Calabash: drink*

Ovaherero as nomadic farmers used to move or migrate from one place to another. It is a general prohibition for the milk from the sacred calabash to be drunk during the migration. This is because the milk of the sacred calabash must be tasted by the priest before it is served or given to other people to consume. Normally this tasting of sacred milk is done in the main hut or at the *okurinwo* 'sacred shrine'. Thus this calabash is praised that it was not drunk from during travel.

### *Calabash: porridge*

When they settled they drank soup from it like porridge which means that this calabash contained milk with large curds. During the movement of travel it was shaken until the curds became a soup-like porridge, and people drank it in the same way as they drank porridge soup. Here the oral poet likens the curds of milk in this sacred calabash to porridge.

### Epithet 3

#### Ovakwatjivi: ancestors

As explained in epithet 2 above.

*Ancestors: Tjiteo*

As in epithet 2, here the oral poet relates members of this matrilineage to Tjiteo as one of its maternal ancestors or uncles. The oral poet repeats the name Tjiteo and relates him to Rukoze and Kaparanga respectively. Rukoze and Kaparanga were parents of Tjiteo.

*Tjiteo: hero*

The term *ombande* 'hero' implies a person admired for courage, fearlessness and outstanding achievements. In this relation these traits are associated with Tjiteo who was a valiant warrior.

*Hero: big*

In this relation the term *onene* 'big' serves as an intensifier that adds emphasis to Tjiteo's heroism.

*Hero: stone*

The oral poet here alludes to one of Tjiteo's heroic deeds. This deed took place at the stone of Kahei and Kaparanga.

The proper names Kahei and Kaparanga are names<sup>72</sup> of cows. In our community cows are given names to ease the milking process and to ease the process of referring to them. When a cow has a name one does not describe it in conversation, but refers to its name and the hearer knows precisely which one is referred to.

The phrase *kewe rooKahei na Kaparanga* 'at the stone of Kahei and Kaparanga' is a praise of a certain place where Tjiteo fought furiously and fearlessly and raided cattle of which Kahei and Kaparanga were two. Thus this alludes to the fight in which Tjiteo took part and where his cows Kahei and Kaparanga originated.

#### **Epithet 4**

##### **Ovakwatjivi: Katana**

This epithet includes a praise of Katana who is also a maternal ancestor of this matrilineage, to whom the oral poet relates Ovakwatjivi. The prefixing of the noun class prefix *oo-* (noun class 2a) to a proper name indicates a specific person and his company. In this epithet it refers to the same person, because his name is repeated.

##### *Katana: Mukumangua*

Similarly, in epithet 3 (repetition of Tjiteo), he repeats the name Katana and relates him to Mukumangua and to the wife of Tjombe respectively. How Mukumangua was related to Katana is not expressed, but his relation to the wife of Tjombe is explained in the next relation.

##### *Katana: wife of Tjombe*

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<sup>72</sup>

These indicate the form of the horns of a particular cow. Kahei is a name given to cows with one or both horns growing downwards. Kaparanga is given when the horns grow roughly straight or wide. A name is given to a cow when it gets its first calf, during the process of taming it, it receives its name.

The oral poet states that the mother of Katana was the wife of Tjombe whose name is not mentioned. It is also normal practice to refer to a married woman as the wife of ..., followed by the name her husband, his praise or a praise of his place of birth.

*Wife of Tjombe: mother*

The oral poet further describes the wife of Tjombe as a mother.

*Mother: mother*

In Otjiherero this is not a repetition as *mama* 'my mother' and *naa* 'mother of' are different concepts. In our culture a child is not allowed to call a woman by her name, as sign of respect. He has to call her mother, the mother of ..., followed by the name of her first child. In this way the oral poet uses this strategy to refer to the mother of Katana.

*Mother: Keurumba*

He refers to her as the mother of Keurumba who was either a sister or brother of Katana.

*Mother: smell*

This mother of Keurumba and Katana had a perfume that had a nice smell, with which she adorned her clothes.

*Mother: cloth*

One of her favourite cloths, was given to her by Mutjise which the oral poet refers to as the cloth of Mutjise.

*Cloth: wife of Hamuningire*

This cloth belonged to the mother of Keurumba and Katana who was the wife of Hamuningire, the father of her children.

### **Epithet 5**

#### **Ovakwatjivi: Mbahimua**

As in epithet 3 and 4, the oral poet starts with the plural form *oo-*, but here does not repeat the proper name in epithet 4. Thus the plural form conveys a similar meaning to that in epithet 3.

Like epithet 3 and 4, this one comprises a subordinated praise of Mbahimua, also a maternal ancestor of this matrilineage, to whom the oral poet relates members of this matrilineage.

*Mbahimua: Tjikuzu*

Here Mbahimua himself is related to Tjikuzu, one of his parents.

*Tjikuzu: ghost of Kavango*

The oral poet proceeds to praise Tjikuzu as the ghost or spirit of Kavango. The relation between Tjikuzu, the ghost and Kavango needs further investigation.

*Mbahimua: piebald*

He also praises Mbahimua through a piebald ox which is praised as having sight and being simultaneously blind.

*Mbahimua: Kananda*

Here Mbahimua is related to Kananda, the ignorant. Kananda disregarded others and excreted wherever he found himself.

In those days people did not have chairs, and men sat on big stones or some who were skilful enough carved stools out of wood. One day Kananda, the 'do-not-care', seated himself on a stone of Mbondi of Muandjiva and excreted on it. The verb *ire ko* literally 'go out on' used here is a euphemism to avoid offensive verbs such as *hana* and *nia* both meaning 'to excrete'. The verb *ire ko* 'go out' is generally used to refer to babies in an act of expelling waste matter.

### **Epithet 6**

#### **Ovakwatjivi: people**

As discussed in epithet 1.

*People: Okakundu*

Although the Ovaherero do not know the number of the members of each matrilineage, it is believed that the Ekwatjivi lineage is among those lineages with a great number of members. For this reason they are praised in that the members of this lineage were full<sup>73</sup> in Okakundu, a place in which a great number of Ovakwatjivi lived.

*Okakundu: sand-wells*

In the past during the dry season, those who lived far from springs or a perennial river, dug sand-wells in river beds. They used the water from these sand-wells for

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<sup>73</sup>

Some people metaphorically praise and liken the members of this matrilineage to *omahangu* 'millet' and *omaha* 'rye', through which they emphasize the point that it is almost possible to count the seeds of *omaha* but pretty near impossible to count those of *omahangu*. Thus Ovakwatjivi are uncountably many.



themselves and sometimes also for their livestock. This place, Okakundu, was well known for the sand-wells dug there and was praised as such.

*Sand-wells: Nakaundu*

Nakaundu was known as a skilful digger of sand-wells and dug them in Okakundu. This is why these sand-wells were associated with him.

*People: people*

Something is missing in this relationship, because the possessive relation signal *y(a)-* 'of' does not refer to noun class 1 to which *ovandu* 'people' belongs. It refers to an understood entity which does not appear in this epithet. The relation signal refers to a noun from noun class 9. In the context of the praise of a matrilineage, one may correctly infer that it refers to *ondjuwo* 'house', a term used to signify a sub-matrilineage.

*People: many*

This relation reinforces the idea that the members of this matrilineage are numerous as discussed above.

*People: cattle*

Given their high number, they also had large herds of livestock, their homesteads were also full of livestock as Hijauarungondo<sup>74</sup> used to say.

*People: Hijauarungondo*

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<sup>74</sup>

In praising this matrilineage some people replace the name Hijauarungondo with Ndanga of Tjinguavi. Both names refer to the same person, because Hijauarungondo simply means Father-of-Rungondo.

The members of this matrilineage were spoken of by Hijauarungondo, the ugly. He used to say that Ovakwatjivi were too many in comparison to the members of the other matrilineages. It sounds like customary social mockery as in a joking relationship. If this is the case, then Hijauarungondo belonged to the Omukweyuva or Omukwauti or Omukwenambura matrilineage, members of which oppose those of Ekwatjivi in social mockery, as explained in chapter 5, section 5.1.

*Hijauarungondo: ugly*

He was ugly and he was praised in that way.

*Hijauarungondo: Muniozondumbo*

Here the oral poet relates him to one of his parents, Muniozondumbo

*Muniozondumbo: climber*

The father of Hijauarungondo, Muniozondumbo, was known as a climber. I do not know what he climbed.

## **Epithet 7**

### **Ovakwatjivi: ovanatje**

In this relation the oral poet uses the term *ovanatje* 'children' as the keyword of this epithet, because this keyword heads the ancestress, Kanaviria, who is considered to be among the founders of this matrilineage.

*Ovanatje: Kanaviria*

In Kaokoland, Kanaviria (or Naviria as known by some) was the first daughter of Mukuatjivi. The two sub-lineages of this matrilineage resulted from the two

daughters of Kanaviria, Muhuka and Mungambu. In central Namibia, however, and according to Kuvare (1977:207), Kanaviria belonged to the sub-lineage of Omuhuka 'morning', named after the elder daughter of Kanaviria.

A well known narration about Kanaviria was that she fastened utensils to a cow as if she lacked people, (she did not lack people as explained above because she had numerous descendants). It is narrated that Kanaviria fastened water utensils to the neck of a cow and she drove it up the mountain of Kozonguendje and not a drop spilt from those utensils, and from that day she was praised in that manner. The part of her praise that praises her as such is left out in this version.

In this relation the members of this matrilineage are praised as if originating from Kanaviria herself. Thus he states that Ovakwatjivi are the descendants of Kanaviria. Here the oral poet does not make any distinction between sub-lineages. He praises all the members collectively as a unity, since they belong to a common overall matrilineage. He praises all as descendants of Misfortune without discriminating.

#### *Kanaviria: mother*

Kanaviria is referred to as *mama* 'my mother' in this sense for respect, or possibly the person who praised her for the first time was probably one of her numerous offspring.

#### *Mother: Tjara*

The oral poet refers to Kanaviria by her other name, that is Tjara. In our community a person may have more than one name. In some versions of the praise of this matrilineage, Kanaviria is referred to as the Omumbanderu-herero<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> Probably one of her parents was an Omumbanderu, a sub-group of the Ovaherero, and the other one an Omuhherero. She was a 'mixture' of these two sub-groups of the same ethnic group.

*Tjara: Kandombo*

In this relation the oral poet alludes in passing to the fact that Tjara was a descendant of Kandombo.

*Tjara: daughter of Rutjindo*

Further on he praises Kanaviria, who was also Tjara, as the daughter of Rutjindo, her father.

*Rutjindo: Koviti*

Rutjindo is further on related to one of his parents, that is Koviti. The name of Koviti embeds his praise as discussed in the following relations.

*Koviti: rhinoceroses*

The praise or origin of the name Koviti is associated with a certain place which is not mentioned here. In this place, after which Koviti was named, the cattle scatter in their forage during the day and gather in the evening, and return home as if they are gathered or herded by somebody. This place had abundant pasture and livestock used to graze for some hours and rest in the shadows of trees. Because of its good pasture, rhinoceroses were found there.

## **Epithet 8**

**Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

*Ovasya* is a neutral term for nephews and nieces which is used as a keyword for epithet 8 to 16.

*Ovasya* 'nephews and nieces' is the keyword that modifies the referent,

Ovakwatjivi. Within maternal relationships, the uncle-nephew relationship is very important. In our culture one's uncle is considered to be one's 'male mother', especially one's own mother's brother. Therefore in all the following epithets, the term *ovasya* 'nephews and nieces' serves as the keyword. This shows the importance of the uncle-nephew relationship, because a nephew is the official heir to his uncle's properties. If a deceased person does not have a direct nephew, any member who belongs to the same matrilineage will inherit his properties.

The question *ongundwee ku u nina omaere owaṇi* 'who is your uncle because of whom you are given sour milk?' serves as one's most important identity. When one arrives at a place where one is not known, one is asked this question for identification. When it is found that one's uncle is known, one is entitled to drink the sacred sour milk, otherwise one will be given *omaṭuka* 'butter milk'. This practice is a way of exposing one's parents' identities, especially from one's mother's side through one's 'male mother' (uncle). In this case one is a proper Omuhherero when at least one's mother is a proper Omuhherero in the sense that she or her grandmothers is or were not descendants of other ethnic groups who came among Ovaherero as captives or herdboys.

#### *Nephews/nieces: warrior*

As usual in the praising tradition, a praise of an outstanding member of that particular matrilineage is taken up into the lineage's praise. Thus, here the members of this lineage are related to a certain warrior. This epithet is dominated by the embedded praise of this warrior. His praise is explained in relations that follow.

#### *Warrior: Kavirongo*

This warrior was a son of Kavirongo.

#### *Warrior: Tjeinja*

The name of this splendid warrior was Tjeinja, son of Kavirongo. This son of Kavirongo was an Omukwatjivi.

In earlier days warriors put ostrich feathers into their hats or made hats from ostrich feathers. These feather hats were known as *ozondjenge* 'warriors' hats'. Tjeinja, the son of Kavirongo, used to wear his feather hat and was nicknamed as Feather 'Tjeinja'. The addition of *tji-* to *einya* 'feather' adds a derogatory meaning to the hat and the owner himself, for most nicknames are used to satirize their carriers, that is the 'man with an ugly feather hat on his head'.

In our community nicknames are predominantly humorous or satirical. They are given to a particular person by a member of his age-set (*ekura*) or his cross cousin (*omuramwe*) as part of the mate joke<sup>76</sup> (*okunyanda oukura*) and cross cousins' jokes<sup>77</sup> (*okunyanda ouramwe/orombe*). The nicknames are also known as sacred names (*omana wamwaha*). Like sacred milk which is not drunk by any person, they are called by certain persons only. All other people call the particular person by his serious and respectful name.

#### *Tjeinja: people*

This relation is expressed in direct speech, because of its emotional involvement. It deals with death, and with this the oral poet wants to convey the sensitivity of what he wants to say and expresses it in direct speech. Whether it was true that it

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<sup>76</sup> All male Ovaherero who were circumcised in the same period of time form a group of mates which is known as *otjiwondo*. The members of each group jokingly accuse and counter-accuse one another of cowardice and physical weaknesses. There are established rules which each member has to obey. The transgressor of these rules is fined a castrated goat or wether or ox, and all the members gather and feast on this animal. Sometimes feasting becomes lavish as many animals are slaughtered and the feast lasts for few days or weeks. Interestingly, the wives of the members have to avoid the use of certain words which are closely associated with the name or origin of their husbands' *otjiwondo* ('mate group').

<sup>77</sup> For a brief explanation of the cross cousins' joke see the discussion of epithet 16 of the Maharero's praise.

is what Tjeinja himself said or whether the oral poet interprets Tjeinja's attitude towards raids, conflicts and wars, is not known.

The sentence '*Ovandu ve ta uriri kave haurwa*' 'people are just killed, but not captured' reveals Tjeinja's attitude towards war. His intention as an excellent warrior was to defend his people with might to avoid them from being captured.

#### *Tjeinja: bull*

As already explained, when a human being is described as a bull that means that he is/was strong, brave and fearless; characteristics possessed and shared by Tjeinja and a bull.

#### *Tjeinja: war*

Here the oral poet states that Tjeinja fought continuously, contemptuous of death and with a strong will to fight despite consequences, as explicitly conveyed by the example of direct speech. Thus Tjeinja was typically involved in endless wars, conflicts and raids.

#### *Tjeinja: Ongueru*

The verb *tjirwa* 'spend the morning' means that he had been fighting that morning at Ongueru. At this place there was a fight in which he was involved which the oral poet alludes to as one of his heroic deeds.

#### *Tjeinja: child of Kondu*

Further on Tjeinja is praised as the child of Kondu who was one of his relatives. The name Kondu heads its explanation or origin, as explained below.

#### *Kondu: Nambungu and Tjikeketa*

The name Konḍu literally means Sheep. The sheep after he was named belonged to Nambunga and Tjikeketa.

*Konḍu: chief of sheep*

The term *ohona* 'chief' in this relation refers to sheep but not to a human being. Nambunga and Tjikeketa had *onḍu ondume* 'wether' which was the leader of sheep after which Konḍu was named.

*Tjeinja: zebra*

In these fights he was riding on his father's favourite horse, Mboki, the horse of Kavirongo. His horse is metaphorically referred to as a zebra. The features shared by a zebra and a horse are numerous and obvious as both belong to the same type of animal family, to which donkeys, horses, mules and zebra belong.

*Tjeinja: rescue*

As a brave warrior Tjeinja came to rescue his father's younger brother at Oviombo. His uncle's homestead was at Oviombo and it was attacked by raiders. He suddenly appeared at the scene and killed the raiders. I do not know against whom he fought at this place.

*Oviombo: cattle of Tjizu*

Oviombo was the name of the place where his uncle lived. This place was praised as 'cattle of Tjizu'.

## **Epithet 9**

**Ovakwatjivi: nephews and nieces**



As discussed in epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Father-of-Kungairi*

Although Kungairi was the elder son of Kahimemua, Kahimemua was well known and praised as father of Kungairi. The phrase Father-of-Kungairi almost replaces his proper name and may be viewed as the proper name of Kahimemua which refers to him in person, while father of Kungairi refers to him as the father of his elder son.

Ovakwatjivi are maternally related to Kahimemua because they are descendants of a common ancestress. The living members of this matrilineage in this epithet are referred to as nephews and nieces of Father of Kungairi, as they are maternally related to him in a uncle-nephew/niece relationship.

The oral poet starts by stating that Ovakwatjivi are nephews and nieces of Kahimemua (or Himemua as some people call him). Here the oral poet does not mention his name directly, he just praises him. Most people know that a person praised in that way or referred to as Father-of-Kungairi is Kahimemua.

He was a brave chief and a prophet of Ovambanderu. He and Nicodemus Kavikunua were executed by the Germans on 12 June 1896 in Okahandja because they fought against a group of German colonisers<sup>78</sup>. Kahihemua was brave and fearless.

His courage and fearlessness are highlighted in the following extended quotation from Sundermeier (1977:46-7):

“On the morning when they were to be taken to the place where they were to be shot, the Germans wanted to tie them up, put them in a cart, and so convey them

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<sup>78</sup> The battle took place on 5 April 1896 at Gobabis (Epako). For detailed discussion of this battle see Sundermeier (1977) 39 - 41 and 62 - 65.

to the place of execution. But Kahimemua refused to be driven. He had put on a jacket and walked ahead of the cart in which Nicodemus lay bound and blindfolded. Then they crossed Okahandja river ... and arrived at the mountain where they were to be executed. Nicodemus was tied with his back to a tree while Kahimemua chose to seat himself in front of a tree trunk. Kahimemua now told the Germans to shoot Nicodemus first since he feared death so much. Thus Nicodemus was executed first while Kahimemua sat on the ground. Then they readied themselves to shoot Kahimemua as he sat there singing. The first six rounds struck him, but he was not dead yet. So they fired another six bullets into his body, and still he did not die. Then Kahimemua, whose eyes had now also been covered, spoke: 'Who is shooting me? Do you not know where to shoot a bull? I am a sovereign and must be killed by a man of rank. Is Samuel not here? Come, take off this blindfold! Do you think I am afraid of death?' When they had removed the cloth, Kahimemua saw that Samuel was indeed not present. He said: 'That officer over there, let him shoot me!' and pointed at his brow between the eyes: that must be the target. Then the officer shot and struck him so that he was dead. When he had drawn his last breath, a low rumbling of thunder was heard even though the sky was cloudless. At the same moment all beasts, chickens, oxen and calves began to cry and lament, so that everyone knew: Kahimemua is dead."

Further on Sundermeier (1986:66) states that Kahimemua "died bravely and Nicodemus as a coward, half-dead with fear already when taken to the place of execution".

This great man belonged to the Ekwatjivi matrilineage and his praise was, therefore, taken up into his lineage praise, because he was a prominent figure within his maternal line.

Kahimemua was a respected and prominent figure in the community. Since circumlocution is used to name him, his name is not directly mentioned. Such circumlocution in Otjiherero implies respect and politeness.

*Father-of-Kungairi: bush*

The relation here is that of a person and his place of residence. This does not mean that Father-of-Kungairi lived in a bush, but the term *engondo* 'bush' is part of the praise of his place of residence.

During the war women with small babies and those who were mourning those who

fell on the battle field were kept at this place of this great man. A certain black and white calf of Karitjita was slaughtered at this place. These two events were taken up into the praise of the place, because Father-of-Kungairi is specified as the one who lived at the place praised in that way. This is also a type of circumlocution because the name of the place itself is not mentioned.

*Father-of-Kungairi: bull*

Here the oral poet describes Father-of-Kungairi physically through a simile in which he likens his thick neck to that of a bull. In Otjiherero the term bull became a symbol for strength, protection and bravery. Thus Father-of-Kungairi was not only prominent but also a bull.

*Father-of-Kungairi: favourite*

Father-of-Kungairi was a chief and a prophet. During his reign he became a prominent figure within the community. Therefore he became the apple of the community's eye.

*Father-of-Kungairi: limb*

The oral poet alludes to an incident that happened while Father-of-Kungairi was a baby. According to oral accounts, a certain ox that belonged to Mapa and/or Maore was slaughtered at its owner's funeral. Kahimemua swallowed its limb. At that time he was a small baby on his mother's back when he swallowed this limb, very small for such an act. He was praised in such a way as to predict his superhuman power which came later in his life. It is narrated that he was a prophet who had superhuman power. According to Tjatindi (1992:124) "he was born legs first without causing complications", an act which is believed to foretell superhuman or special attribute.

Further on Tjatindi (1992:124) describes his superhuman power as in the following

quotation:

“His talents included, among others, magical activities. We should say he was the leader of the Mbanderus, and he was a spiritual leader, a man of diversity. In times of drought people would come to him to beg him to pray for rain. He asked for rain, and it did rain. When there was a disease on the rampage, he would perform rituals and eradicate the disease. He and Kamunguma of Kaviria possessed the ability to communicate with supernatural forces. Thus he was a leader; he was a man of power; and he could speak to the dead.”

For further examples of his superhuman or supernatural activities, see Tjatindi (1992:126-9).

It is interesting to note here how the oral poet beautifully harnesses synonyms, *pondikwa potjivereko*. *Ondikwa* and *otjivereko* are exchangeable synonyms both terms being translated into English with one word only, ‘carrying skin’. See further discussion of harnessing synonyms in chapter 11, section 11.1.13.

*Father-of-Kungairi: dog*

The relation here is that of Kahimemua and the praise of his place of birth. Once again the oral poet utters the praise of that place without uttering the name of the place he praises. It is now left to us to infer the name of the place of his birth from its praise. Usually an oral poet does this, anticipating that the audience already knows the place praised in this way or they know what he praises.

According to Tjatindi (1992:124) Kahimemua was born at Omusorakuumba and he praises it as *moumba yanaa Kavi, mokarumendu ketu kaana Ndjere yaKamuhonga ku yake hingi ozongombe zombunda ozotjiuru aze kanyinganyinga aayo ze nongutiriona, ngu maku zu owanaa Kamburo, omuzorundu tukutuku owotjizire kezumo omberipa aya piti utuku* ‘in the problem of the mother of Kavi, in our short man of the mother of Ndjere of Kamuhonga, who drove those cattle at the back and those in front moved as if they had a young bull, who is said to be of the mother of Kamburo, the pitch black, with shadow on the belly like a mother’.

According to Njanekua (1992:135) a place that is praised as in this praise is known as Okandjoze, a place where Father-of-Kungairi lived. Here he praises it as (appears in translation only) “of the dogs of Karitjita that always walk around in Tjirongo’s farmstead: that do not eat the red meat of a human being or zebra: that are all male dogs”. Thus, Njanekua’s version agrees to a certain extent with the one we are analysing. There is an obvious confusion between his place of residence and his place of birth. Thus the exact place of birth is controversial.

*Dog: Kauzuuo and Nangava*

At the place of his birth there was a certain dog of Kauzuuo and Nangava. In Njanekua’s version these are dogs, and they belonged to Karitjita.

*Dog: old*

This dog was old. The compound noun *omukururume* ‘old man’ behaves as an adjective. In Otjiherero when a noun serves as an adjective it keeps its ordinary class prefix: it does not enter into a grammatical agreement with its antecedent. Thus *omukururume* ‘old man’ modifies *ombwa* ‘dog’ without class prefix agreement, the relationship is appositionally realised.

*Dog: red-meat*

This is actually the praise of this dog which is inserted in the praise of the place where Father-of-Kungairi was born. This old dog did not eat raw meat as dogs do. Therefore this place acquired this as part of her praise.

## **Epithet 10**

**Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed under epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Kairi*

The oral poet here relates Ovakwatjivi to Kairi, one of the ancestors of this matrilineage.

*Kairi: strength and buffalo*

Kairi was known because of his extraordinary strength. The oral poet compares his strength to that of a buffalo and everywhere he was known as the very strong man. Because of the popularity of his strength, he was taken up into his lineage's praise.

### **Epithet 11**

**Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed in epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Tjiparu*

Once again Ovakwatjivi are related to another ancestor who was Tjiparu, but his fame is not well known.

*Tjiparu: house of wife of Ngotue*

The term *ondjuwo* 'hut/house' in this relation means a sub-matrilineage of this matrilineage. The wife of Ngotue, Tjiparu's mother, was the first ancestress who founded this sub-lineage. Ngotue was the father of Tjiparu.

### **Epithet 12**

**Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed under epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Hilarapi*

Hilarapi was a skilled rider and earned his fame from his horsemanship. This epithet is dominated by the praise of Hilarapi. According to Kaputu (1992b:60) Hilarapi “was killed in the Nama war at Otjimbingwe”.

*Hilarapi: valley with millstones*

Ovakwatjivi are nephews and nieces of Hilarapi of the valley with millstones, but without mills. This is a metaphor. Ovaherero women grind maize to powder by using two millstones, the upper and the lower millstone. The upper stone is a round stone that fits within the hand. The lower millstone is flatter and wider. A woman lifts the upper stone and pounds and grinds the maize between these stones. When horses are running in a valley (with or without saddles), they thud, making sounds similar to those made by millstones. That is why it is said that the valleys have millstones but no mills. It means that the thuds of horses’ hoofs sound much like the noise made by millstones, but there are no mills in the valleys.

Hilarapi was praised in this way because he was a good horseman. He is also associated with horses, therefore this part of his praise occurs in the praise of horses, see Ohly (1990:64).

*Valley: spotted ox of Ndjunga and others*

A spotted ox of Ndjunga, Naori and Katjavare grazed in this valley. The term *ondemba* means a colour resembling that of a guinea-fowl, but slightly different from the *onganga* colour as explained in the discussion of the praise of Okahandja, epithet 1.

*Spotted ox: wararara*

The term *wararara* is an onomatopoeic imitation of the ox lowing. Its lowing is likened with the sound made when milk is poured into an empty butter calabash.

When a homestead is visited by many guests, much milk is poured into the normal sour milk calabash so that there will be enough for the guests. None is poured into the butter calabash for one or two days. After the guests leave, when milk is poured into the butter calabash, then it makes a '*wararara*' sound. Thus in this epithet the valley is associated with three similar but different sounds or noises. That made by Hिरarapi's horses' hoofs, the spotted ox lowing and that made by pouring milk into an empty butter calabash.

*Hिरarapi: wet-mouth*

In this relation the oral poet states that Hिरarapi had a wet mouth. Some people, like Hिरarapi, seem to have much saliva and when they speak saliva drops from the mouths. Characteristically their mouths are always wet. These people are jokingly described as having wet-mouths.

*Hिरarapi: birth*

The news of Hिरarapi's birth spread like a bush fire. When he was born the news of his birth was heard far away. The news soon reached the homestead of his relative Mujoro of Kapanda.

**Epithet 13**

**Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed in epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Kangombe*



This is the shortest epithet of all. It consists of a phrase of two words, that is the keyword and its complement without further subordination. Here the oral poet relates Ovakwatjivi to Kangombe, without praising Kangombe as he does in other epithets. Kangombe was one of wealthy members of this matrilineage; wealthy in terms of livestock. He resided in Okakarara or Otjozondjupa. He was the first chief of the Onguatjindu's royal house. He is also mentioned in epithet 27 of the radio praise.

#### **Epithet 14**

##### **Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed under epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Kamurondu of Kahiha*

Here Ovakwatjivi are praised as the nephews and nieces of Kamurondu of Kahiha, whose fame is not much known.

*Kamurondu: generosity*

The word *omunambururiro* means to give generously without avarice. Thus Kamurondu is praised as a very generous person, his generosity being compared to that of Katuusira. His generosity is repeated in a further embedded complement, but in this complement he is described as an excessively generous person (*ondjandje okumana*). The phrase *ondjandje okumana* consists of *ondjandje* 'giver' (derived from the verb *okuyandja* 'to give') and *okumana* 'to finish'. This means that he could give away everything he owned.

*Kamurondu: chief of Nehova*

Kamurondu was also related to the chief of Nehova.

## **Epithet 15**

### **Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed in epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Katjihenda*

In this relation Ovakwatjivi are praised as the nephews and nieces of Katjihenda with the war cap of Muinjo.

The term *onyange* means a war cap made of a jackal's skin with its tail hanging down at the back of its carrier which were worn by splendid warriors, thus by implication Katjihenda was a splendid warrior for his bravery. This warrior's cap was given to him by Muinjo.

## **Epithet 16**

### **Ovakwatjivi: nephews/nieces**

As discussed under epithet 8.

*Nephews/nieces: Kahitjene*

In this relation the oral poet states that Ovakwatjivi are nephews and nieces of Kahitjene (or Hitjene as some people call him). Kahitjene was one of the wealthiest livestock owners of his time. His herd, according to Werner (1998:34), comprised approximately "30 cattle posts with more than 18, 000 head of cattle".

*Kahitjene: Muhoko and Mbungu of Kezeva*

Here the oral poet relates Kahitjene to some of his grandparents.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: Omuambo of Kahumba of Koviti*

Here Kahitjɛnɛ is praised as the Omuambo. Why he is praised as such needs further investigation.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: shoes*

Kahitjɛnɛ was very large and so wore big shoes. His abnormally big shoes were taken up into his praise.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: springbok*

This relation indicates that Kahitjɛnɛ was also a splendid warrior. The springbok that is mentioned in this relation is just the praise of a place which he went through when he went to war. The praise 'cloth of Kauvari on his back' means that he was wearing the traditional uniform.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: black, shining and muscular*

In this relation the oral poet describes the physical characteristics of Kahitjɛnɛ. Vedder (1938:217) quotes the missionary Kolbe describing the physical appearance of Kahitjɛnɛ as follows:

"Kolbe describes Kahitjɛnɛ as a tall, distinguished-looking man with piercing eyes. 'He is certainly one of the most sensible men of his race. His behaviour is modest and unassuming and he is never officious or tiresome. He decorates his person lavishly with beads and iron ornaments.'"

The oral poet describes Kahitjɛnɛ in much more detail through similes. He describes him in a simile in which he likens his light black or brown colour of skin to that of shadows at sunset.

He also 'shines like a rock smeared with fat'. In those days smearing oneself with

fat was the equivalent of bathing. The process was to 'clean' oneself by smearing butter fat mixed with red powder ground from red ochre. Kahitjẽne did this, and in this simile the oral poet compares his shining body to a rock smeared with fat.

This 'smeared rock' relates to a folktale in Otjiherero. In short, the folktale goes: Jackal and Hyena hunted together and killed two oxen. After that they quarrelled. Hyena wanted to beat Jackal. Jackal ran away but took some fat with him. He climbed onto a high rock and smeared it with fat. When Hyena came there, he wanted to climb the rock to go after Jackal, but every time he slid off. By implication Kahitjẽne's shining body is likened to this rock.

Further on the oral poet describes Kahitjẽne as having large muscles in his neck that moved when he walked. The oral poet likens him to a certain son of Kamenje who had similar muscles in his neck.

*Kahitjẽne: gaiting, chirping and bad-speaker*

In this relation the oral poet describes the behavioural characteristics of Kahitjẽne. The oral poet imitates Kahitjẽne's walking- and speaking style respectively. He imitates these styles through a mimicking- and an onomatopoeic verb respectively. These verbs are *hihina* 'gait' and *tina* 'chirp'.

The verb *hihina* mimics a walk faster than an ordinary walk and with a jerk. Thus Kahitjẽne's walking style was much faster than normal, with an up and down movement of the body.

The verb *tina* 'chirp' onomatopoeically imitates the sound made by birds or insects. His manner of speaking was a chirping sound - an extraordinary voice for such a giant.

We might infer from this description that Kahitjẽne was a terrifying or dreadful figure. His presence and piercing eyes are seen to instill fear into those who come

into contact with him. Further on the oral poet praises him as a bad speaker with a hooked arm. Probably he was short tempered, and as a chief he scolded his subjects, as reinforced by the example of direct speech is this epithet.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: seen by wife of Muniozondjira*

According to the oral poet, Kahitjɛnɛ was seen by the wife of Muniozondjira, the mother of Kaeru who was frightened by his terrifying nature.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: does not flash*

This relation is set in direct speech in which Kahitjɛnɛ himself wonders about his terrifying nature. The direct speech consists of two parts. The first part is a reporting clause followed by direct speech. In this direct speech Kahitjɛnɛ is speaking about himself. He says: "I do not flash, I am not rain, how do I terrify people?" This is a clear indication that he himself realized that people were afraid of him.

It is also noteworthy that Ovakwena (Nama and associates) nicknamed him Lightning.

The verb *tjena* means to flash. If his name, Kahitjɛnɛ, was derived from this verb which Ovakwena translated as lightning, then his name should be spelt with an alveolar n [n] as in the quotation above, and not with a dental n [ɲ] although people pronounce it with the dental n. In this case his name literally means 'I do not flash'.

*Kahitjɛnɛ: bull*

Kahitjɛnɛ is metaphorically referred to as *omutwezu* 'bull'. Normally a bull is spelt *ondwezu*. Thus *omutwezu* means a 'personified' bull, because of the affixation of the human noun class *omu-*. As already explained, the image of a bull conveys the

meaning of strength, braveness and protection, traits that fit him well.

*Kahitjeṇe: Katjingauri*

This is a relation of Kahitjeṇe and his mother. According to Kaputu (1992a:8) Kahitjeṇe's mother was Katjingauri<sup>79</sup>, "a woman of omungambu house: of omukuatjivi social rank: the mother of a Mbanderu-Herero: who climbed Kozonguendje's mountain".

It is narrated that Katjingauri was the wife of Tjiponda<sup>80</sup>, father of her son Kahitjeṇe. When Tjiponda died, she was inherited by her husband's nephew Rukoro (in accordance with our customary laws). Rukoro lived at Okakango (today known as Gross Barmen) to the west of Okahandja. While she was in Okakango she heard her former homestead was attacked by the Nama. She asked permission from her new husband to go to Okahandja to praise (as a form of encouragement) the warriors while they were fighting. While she was in the process of praising, the Nama shot her and cut off her hands and feet to remove the beads from her arms and ankles. In version D of the praise of Okahandja we find a phrase that reads as *mondjuwo yomukazendu waTjiponda* 'in the hut/house of the wife of Tjiponda'. She was also taken into the praise of Okahandja. See version D, epithet 9 of the Okahandja praise under appendix 3.

*Kahitjeṇe: homesteads*

The oral poet praises two homesteads that were raided by Kahitjeṇe. He praises the first homestead without naming it. The second homestead was that of Kahitjeṇe's uncle Mungunda as explained by Vedder (1938:248-9) in detail in the following extended quotation:

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<sup>79</sup> Her name is misspelt as 'Katjinguari' in Kaputu (1992a).

<sup>80</sup> Tjiponda's praise is in appendix 4.

“Mungunda, Kahitjene’s uncle, died in Otjimbundja, and Kahitjene, as a nephew, came in control of his estate. Trouble arose over the division of inheritance, and Kahitjene was accused of having acted unfairly. These accusations annoyed Kahitjene, and he took with him a number of cattle which it was said that he had no right to take. Mungunda’s sons went to Omuramba; Kagee was the most powerful of them. Kahitjene found it necessary to establish some cattle posts on the Omuramba. He sent some cattle there which he inherited from Mungunda, and he entrusted the supervision of these posts to his son, Kausuva. The latter was killed, together with his herdsmen, by Mungunda’s sons, who then appropriated the cattle, which in their opinion belonged to them. Kausuva was buried at Omuramba where Mungunda’s tribe lived.... So Kahitjene made preparations to go and ‘view’ the grave of his son. He knew what that meant for him, but he had no fear.... Mauto, Kavakuna’s son, and Tjamuaha’s grandson, who was Kahitjene’s nephew, and so the principal heir to his property, went with him. Before the party ever reached the grave it was attacked by Mungunda’s sons and their followers, and it turned out just as Kahitjene had said - his people deserted him when the danger was at its height. A [sic] arrow struck the old warrior down; Mauto ran to him and bent down to help him and to extract the arrow. One of Mungunda’s men saw this, and he ran up and stabbed both Mauto and his uncle Kahitjene with a single thrust of his spear. Kahitjene was dead and his heir was dead too.”

This is the story or incident alluded to in this relation. This is why the oral poet concludes this epithet that he raided the homestead of his uncle, Mungunda, which dearly cost him his life.

## 10.5 New Creations

### Oradio (Radio)

(J. A. Kaputu)

#### 1 Omutandu

woradio

yOtjiherero

indu tji ya tjiti ozombura

omurongo

zokuzikama

kwayo

moukoto

wehi

rahi

yaKauakovere

kozombwa

zaKuzema

ehi

rahi

yaKaipita

wozombiriona

zanaa

Matundu

ovihaori

nde ri ku inyangu Kauatja

kongombe

yaRujo

re

na mokati kotjiwana

tjOvaherero

otjiwana

otjikuru

tji tja za kehi

romirunga

mbi ha sivi

rotuu

tu tu ha kava

#### 2 Ondji ri yo

oradio

yOtjiherero

ondwezu

otjizororovazu

ndji mai zepere ovandu pomambo



- tjimuna *inyangu Hijaurungond'*  
okavi  
waNambaru  
wa*Muniozondumb'*  
 otjironda  
ngu *ma zepere ovandu*  
 pevau  
 ronyama
- 3     **Ondumewa**  
       yombwa  
       ndji takatere *ondjuwo*  
               yamundu  
               okutja moukot' *ondjuwo*  
                               mamu *taṭuna*  
       nangwari tji *mamu taṭuna nai*  
                               omambo  
                               ongu mai paha
- 4     **Ondwezu**  
       omukururume  
       ndja kayata ozondambo *momatundu*  
                               wovandu  
                               mbe zera
- 5     **ya handjaur' eraka**  
       rayo  
       ari zuvara  
               otjomuatje  
                               waHumavindu  
       nongombe  
       yaKozonjanda  
       indji ombah' otjitundu
- 6     **i iwe**  
       i tjiukwa  
       otjorurond'  
               okuni  
       nombur'  
               okurooro  
       tjimuna Katjita  
               waKandjoze  
       ngu ma ryanga morukongo  
                               rwozombw'  
                               ozondumbu  
                               e hi nakukayeva
- 7     **mai yanenwa mOvakwendata**  
       yondjuwo  
       onene  
       yozongombe  
       mu ng' amu yanenwa *ovitenda*

ngamwa avihe

ovandu

yomatup'

omakukutu

otjowozondera

mu mwa yenda *Hongonekua*

wozonduwombe

zaNdero

na Kejaua

waKamukandi

oonaa

Nauanga

Ovakwendata

yominguma

mu mwa yendere *Tjiponda*

waKamakararu

waHijanangombe

ngwa ri nouta

notjimunguma

ngwa ri norukaku

rwondovi

omuyeye

ngwa sora

nozombwa

mbari

ooindji

Katjiurutjombungu

na Ndamberakuria

8

### Vapuratene

vanatje

vatate

ovaenda

ovakwetu

*Ovaherero*

mbu twa kondera pamwe *ondondū*

yozonyok'

omapongo

9

### Oñ' otjitenda

otjovitenda

ovikwao

mbya yetwa i *omundu*

*mimaa*

*Nangeama*

yaHauanga

*omuhona*

ngwe tu yeta kohuurire

nungwari ngwe tu yeta kousemba

tu tjiwe kutja omahi ye tjata vi  
 nokunanwa ye nanwa vi  
 omuhona  
     wosengo  
         omurondo  
             otjondjembo  
 ngwa kwaterwa kOtjizeva  
         kovasuko  
             vaKavipangaangero  
             ovawa  
             ovindambona  
             mbu ya ve kangar'  
                             omayova  
 wana  
     yaKarumbi  
         kaMuherero  
 Tjiikumbua Tjiiningirua  
     kozoochi  
         yaUorumuṅa  
             yongombe  
                 yaKandondū  
                 ehuri mu yozongoro  
                 ehuri mu yovita  
 Tjiiningirua  
     kozoochi  
         yaKorota  
         wonyange  
             yaMuinjo  
             yaTjipurukisa  
             koviṅa  
                 vyaKamberipa  
 ondwa tji i ningirwa  
     kozoochi  
         yaKorota  
         wenga  
             raKahing'  
             etarazu  
             ndi ha renge  
                             mbanda  
 eye  
     ongu ri Samuela Maharero  
         karumbi narire kokumakera  
         hango  
             yaMuua na Mutindi  
         tjiputu  
             tjondjuwo  
                 yaTjondū

okuyanwa

ngu ma yaruka mooina

10 **Oradio**

yOtjiherero

onguru

ondja hepur' on<sub>di</sub>ro nozon<sub>di</sub>ro

zovandu

ozosewa novahepundu novahepauke novaingona

yotjiwana

hi

ondja hepur' on<sub>di</sub>ro

yomuatje

waKamuatjombonde

omuhona

wonguv' otjondana

ngwa kwatererwe kOkahurimehi

kongombe

yaKati

kaKarorua

onduwomb'

ombond'

ozonya

porwazo

pu pe hi

nomundu

omuhona

ngwa ong' ovandu

tji va za motumbo

twouhuura

womuhona Kaiser

omuhona

waKangu

kozonyanda

wahokuru Tjimanangombe

waHengua

ihe

ouhona

mbwa yendere nao

otjozonyara komake

11 **Oradio**

ondji ri yo

ndja hepur' on<sub>di</sub>ro

yomuatje

wahi

yaKarukua

yanaa

Muvi

- muzorundu  
wozongominya  
zaKatjisemo  
ozombwa  
ndu ya ze kamunika  
kozondjeno
- 12 ya ire kokure  
indu tji ya kaet' omaraka  
ai kambur' eraka  
romuatje  
waKapika  
kaHamanganda  
omuhona  
ngu ha tu  
otjomuti  
waRujombo
- 13 ai kakonda Otjitundhuna  
ongwe  
yanaa  
Muambo  
ombambaro  
yaTjouṭuku  
ndji maku zu ozongwe  
ozongwao ze tjinda  
noyo kai tjindi vari
- 14 ai i kokure  
ai kayata mOkaandjangomb'  
okotuhawe  
kondoto  
yaMbuima  
ondjerera  
yaMbinge  
ai ye sye kondjipo  
korui kotjirongo  
ku ze nwa
- 15 ai kayata monḡu  
yaTjiseua  
yaKambe  
endurumba  
ndji ri komutwa  
waRukuma  
aayo oyo ndjini
- 16 wina ya kayatere momuramba  
wovitundu  
nu mbu hi namaendo  
mbu ri ongoro  
yana

17    ya kayata eyendo  
           romuatje  
             waTjirongo  
               yaMbinge  
                 waNdjere  
                   yaKamuhonga  
           ingwi omuwa  
           ngwa minikw' ozondjima  
                           zaMuhiva na Ruvango  
                           aze yoro  
                           aze twa komayo  
           omuheze  
             otjoruuwa  
           omunyenanyene  
             otjonyoka  
           indu tja ire metemba  
                           raSamina  
                           waNdukuravirongo  
           tja ire kOkarundu  
                           kaMbeti  
                           kaHamujemua  
                           ku ka umb' ombunda mezeva  
                                   aay' ongandu  
   yaMuakapumba  
           wa kavazere oukurukaze  
                           waNgokua  
                           awa kurupa  
                           awa nonopara  
                           ehozu au kondera kozongoro  
           wa kavazere ozongomb'  
                           ozombotoona  
                           zahi  
                           yaTjerimba  
                           aza kuram' ombambar'  
                                   otjozondema  
   zozombwa  
           tja ire pamwe nomuatje  
                           we  
                           Ruvambi  
                                   rwokomaihi  
   omaandjera  
           ootji va kamun' ozombotoona  
                           mbari

ooindji *Kovikungo*  
yaNambuaja  
na indji *Mujoro*  
yaKatjindo

18 **Oradio**

yOtjiherero  
katjiryange  
ndji *mai ryanga*  
oondjere *norupuka*  
ind' orusesuramaendo  
nomund' a huma  
ndji *kara pomatando*  
aayo i paka

19 ai **kara** pomazikiro

wovanatje  
ovahona  
pekepeke  
ooindu *tji ya kara pomazikiro*  
womuatje  
munaa  
Kavikua  
kaTjanda  
tjaMaaua  
waMaandomare  
omuhona  
omure  
omuzorundu  
omunyenyanyene  
otjOmuambo  
waKahumba  
kaKoviti  
ohekaku  
ngwa kond' *omenye*  
yaKombango  
nombanda  
yaKauvari  
ketambo  
ihe  
mukururume  
ongundwe  
yaihe  
hi  
yaina *Kahitjene*  
waMuhoko na  
Nambungu  
yaKezeva  
omuatje

waRiruako  
 omuatje  
waKuaima  
 tate Komuini kOsona  
kongombe  
yaKatend'  
ombahe  
ndji ri ku ye

- 20 ya kakonda *ondonda*  
ndji' ombapa  
 yoruuma  
ai hi nazongombe  
ohakondwa  
     i mutumba  
     na ngu notjivereko  
 amaku munika nawa *kozondje*  
     zaKarikan'  
     omao  
 amaku munika nawa *kotjiuru*  
     tjongombe  
     yaHeuva  
     yaHambondi  
     yaKapaha  
         kondyautuku  
     ongomb'  
         onduwombe  
         ohaka  
         yovingore  
         yoonaa  
             Mbatjiua  
             Mbatjiua  
                 yongonga  
                 yaKatua

- 21 ya kayatakana mozongombe  
     zaTjihungu  
         tjOmukweyuva  
             woyapera  
                 yamwa Kaamba  
 oveheji tjandje mave tja:  
     "Tjii hapo i paha tjike nu mai i pi"  
 nangwari tjandje *okatjikongamambo*  
     yana  
         yaNauanga  
         ooNihova  
             yohorongo  
         na Nihova  
             yaMururu



ovare  
yovitambo  
mbe rikander' ozongombe  
ava kupa  
imb' ooKandiri  
kaTjitana  
na *Kandiri*  
kaMutambo

*Hava*  
yomatako  
na *Hava*  
yondungasengo

22 ya kayatana mEpako

rozonyanda  
kondana  
yaKaikondiruumu  
kohunandera  
yaKaeru  
koupindi  
ndja kaTira kOtjinana  
kongoro  
yaToromb'  
orungwini  
ndji ha kwata  
ketundu  
rozongomb'  
otjozondjou  
ekura *nomuatje*  
waKavikunua  
ketundu  
rozongombe  
zetu  
ozosupi  
ozondaur'  
ozombambaro  
zovizumo  
nde ha yowa ndambo  
zombumbuyona  
yanaa  
Tjiseua  
omangura  
ngu maze nikor' okupweya  
ozongombe  
zOmumbanderu  
wanaa  
Kamburo  
ozongombe

- zaNguvauva  
waTjozohongo  
zaKatua  
kaKainakuva
- 23      tjangje aya **tand'** okuyenda kOtjawana  
           tjovikori  
           kongwe  
           yaKazaoro  
           kongwa  
           yaKame  
           yongombe  
                   yaTjitumb'  
                   onganga  
                   ndja ri *nomuzorokova*  
                           omuwa  
                           mbwa *ri*  
                                   kozongomb'  
                                   ozombambi
- 24      wina ya **ire** kovikango  
           vyomongwa  
           mbya muna Tjombe  
           Kambazu ka utuka a horeke  
           kozondju  
                   zainyangu Kambahoka  
           korumbo  
                   rwomanyando
- 25      nungwari i **zuvaka** *kokure*  
           kozombako  
           zooKapo na Ndjoura  
           kongombe  
           yaMbandi  
           ondumbu  
           mozondambo  
           zozongombe  
                   zomukurundu  
                   waKarukua  
                   eyuru  
                   ret'  
                   ewa  
                   nda tja ronda  
                   *mingwari* nda tira  
                           kutja kari na zombande  
                           kari rondwa kari na virondero  
                   ozongomb'  
                           ozombonde nozongonga  
                           otjondwezu  
                                   yaMurangere

waNanda  
ondu  
yomukuva

26 i zuvaka ngamba nga nai moukoto

worumbo

rwaKahako

ngwa ri notjiwonga

nozongomb'

ozonduwombe

nambano ngu maku zu *wa tumba*

wa mun' *ovanatje*

vahi

yaMberera

mbe ze rya

mbe ze mana

yomuti

omuw'

omongorwa

mbwa rir' otjizumba

*ovanatje*

vahi

yaTeta

vozongombe

zetu

omakondo

oviwerawere

otjovina

vyopehuri

ozohaputarwautuku

otjondwezu

yaKaseua

kaTjivinga

tjoyaNdomba

27 ya ire kokure kokure

kehi

raKangombe

ngu nozongombe

*omuatje*

waNgura

waTjitombo

waNdjaramena

*ihe*

yaKambazombi

wondwezu

yaTjihama

ondwezu kotjiuru

mwarumana

*omuhona*

wongunguru motjiuru

ngwa *tumbire aha vazewa*

otjomurunga pondomba

*omuhona*

ngu ya *kanga*

otjomukazona

ngu ya ha oto *ombepera*

amai zu pehi komataura

*muna*

*Katuse*

ka*Tjivanda*

tjongwatjiya

womusuko

waKazongaru

waNgombe

wotjari

ngu ma ryanga nomuvya

kozongama

indu tji ma tja:

“nu nai hi rire poo hi ure?

omahwa ya pire tjimwe”

*ehi*

ehona

romahi

eingona

romahi

wOvaherero

nga mwa tokutir’ *omuatje*

waMbazombi

omuwa

omuhona

ngwa ta e hi ya kuha kovandu

28 **Eraka**

rayo

rizuvara nangarire *kokure*

komatundu

wetu

wounene kOtjandiha

nga *kokure*

ku *hi*

yaRavindikua

wongwe

yaKutera

koya*Kauaja*

worusengo

ngu ya *hungire*

- e rizerire  
 e riitaverere  
 ooinyangu Kakururume  
 kondjuwo  
 yamukaa  
 Mbarangua  
 ave kaima  
 aayo kape na varumendu
- 29 i zuvara nga kokure  
 kotjiwa  
 otjirongo  
 tji tia muna Kaumbangere  
 waTjombe  
 kozombonde  
 mbari  
 ooindji Tjimbonde  
 yaMutunda  
 ndja kat' omayuva aya koro  
 na indji ombonde  
 yovanatje  
 vahi  
 yaMbanda  
 yomband'  
 ombwa  
 ndja ruka Ndoni
- 30 ya kwat' omahungi  
 otjondje  
 yaKanguati
- 31 Oradio  
 ndji  
 onene  
 mo i kondoroka  
 no i vaza  
 tjina ndi erongo  
 raMbambi  
 yaHenda Katjiu'  
 omukwatjivi  
 ngu ha ri na matuvika
- 32 ye ura  
 ya har' omasa  
 ya yandj' onyune  
 kovanatje na kovanene  
 kozosewa novahepundu  
 mu ve he tji umana rukwao  
 va mun' epanga  
 ndi ha urwa  
 ndi ve pora kourizemburuka

- 33      mamu **pambaukire** pi  
             tji mamu tja: “ya ri pi”  
             mOtjiwarongo  
             tjorutenda  
             kongombe  
             yaKambirongo  
             ondjeo  
             ndji ri komuhona  
             waKaoko  
             ketundu  
             raKazombinde  
             waUamburu  
             munaa  
             Kamuhao  
             kondjimba  
             omu nga i ri ngamba nga nai  
   i zuvara
- 34      vari ya **hepur’ ondiro**  
             yomuhona  
             womainya komeho  
                                   otjotjipuka  
                                   tjokuti  
                                   otjironde  
   tjovikwao  
             omure  
             womaoko  
             ngu he ri omur’  
                                   otjitaka  
             ngwa kamunik’ ovasuko  
   vaiye  
   warwe  
   kokure koJamaika  
             omuatje  
             wovanatje  
             vahi  
             yaKarunga  
             wana  
             yaMuvi  
                                   muzorundu  
                                   wozongominya  
   zaKatjisemo  
                                   ndu ya ze kamunika  
   kozondjeno  
             ovakazendu  
             yetu  
             ovawa  
             Ovakweyuva

mba rara kongotw' *onganda*  
yaMaendo  
tji va *hiti moukot' onganda*  
ave sora  
ava rambuka novanatje povivereko  
imba mba munik' *ombunga*  
yaKautunja  
ouyenda ai teya  
ai rara mutenya

omuatje  
wovanatje  
wozongombe  
zetu  
za*Tjikange*  
*tjondjombo*  
yaMunduva  
inda nda *hungira Kakundumane*  
kongwe  
yaKombango  
a *tja:*  
"mbe ze hirire ru~~x~~e  
ozondwezu nozond~~x~~endu  
nozonduwombe  
zazo  
mbe kezemuna rumwe  
tji za nu  
tji za ronda  
*omeva tji ya kaziza pehi*  
kozondjezu"

omuatje  
wozongombe  
zavo  
ozosaona  
*zomakopi kovinyo*  
*otjondwezu*  
yaTjitendero  
*ozonduwombe*  
nde ha tumburwa *komurungu*  
kotjiuru i ovarise  
zombang'  
ombi  
nde zera  
inda nda *kateer' ewe*  
*kondjerera*  
yaMbinge  
komapyu narire kotjitonge  
tate

hi

yakovakurukaze

mbu ya ve tendun' otjipo

ngurova ave kanikora

omuatje

omusya

waTjijapa

waKarukua na *Nangombe*

*yongombe*

yaMunduva

ngu *ya kamunik'*

otjovitundu kEhangero

notutjanda komakondero

omuhongore

ngu maku zu *i ya hongor'*

*ongombo*

kondwa aya vandara

nomuriro

kondwa awa kena

a hongora *nokakambe*

kaHizembua

kombuk'

ombanda

a hongora *nombwa*

yaKozonde

indji yaKaurindumbi

kozonde

zaMur'

*omukaa*

Ndero

*okasaona*

kaTjiuangombe

*ondimbo*

yaMuatuje

okasaona

ketu

okawa

ku make tw' *okati*

kongoro

nake *tja:*

"mba kweya"

*amaku munika*

nawa *kozombu*

zetu

zomeva

*momina*

nde ri *omutwa*



omuatje

womusuko

waKandirikirira

yosina

yaRukombo

osina

yetu

ombwa

omango

pu pe ha i make

nangarir' omangaha

omuatje

omusya

waingwi omundu

omukuryoma

ngwa tjirwa norukoro kokure

kOtjandiha

komatundu

wetu

wounene

ka tjirwa

ama haverw'

omanga

na ha tupuka

omuatje

womusuko

waingwi woinwoko

ngwa rurum' ondjombo

yaKandjoz'

otjisema

na ha tu mo

okaserandu

woohi

yaUazeua

omuhona

omuhona

omuingona

nu wa ri omuhona

ku twe rihonger' okunana

omuhona

ku twa horer' okukaenda

omuhona

ku twa horer' ondengero nouhirona

ombande

ngu va tjere

omumumandu

kutja omundu u rira vi omumumandu  
ama yanenwa mu *Tjiheze*

Omukwendata

woyanaa

*Kamaneka*

yaNandu

yaNdauua

yaKamuhonga

*mam'*

ombonge

ngu ya *tuk'*

ondukwa

nombaze

morukupo

rwaKozonjanda

*ongerero*

yovanatje

yaRukoze

omuhona

ngwa *hungirir' omambo movahuure*

*ombura ozongombe*

tji za wire

mu mwa wir' *ongombe*

ya*Tjerije*

tjaNgura

ondovazu

mozondovazu

ombapa

mozombapa

a *kahungira*

rumwe *korumbo*

rwaKahako

ngwa *ri notjiwonga*

nozongomb'

ozonduwombe

omuhona

ngu ha pindike

munaa

*Ngondivi*

yaKataura

*ondekirona*

yonganda

ya*Vingava*

waNdjima

omuhona

ngwa *raera*

kutja *ombindu kai yama*

aayo wa ri movita vine  
omuhona  
ku twa ningir' omeva metundu  
rahi  
yaKambao  
a hungire ku na O'Lina kOutjo  
wozondjima  
mbwa punda Tjirire  
waMunduva  
waMbinge  
Outjo  
ouwa  
mbwa pundira kozongoro  
owa ngu ma tira  
atu nu omeva metundu  
retu  
atu tura  
atu yambarara  
 muhuka atu tja:  
 "twa tondjara"  
e tu povikurya  
atu ri  
a risa ovakurundu  
ve  
 ovikurya  
mbya kaisa  
 kovahonge  
Ovaingirisa  
ovanatjari  
omuhona  
ngwa hungira kaṭṭi  
 ave tjangovasi ma tupuka  
ma kahungirir' ehi pendje  
otjomundu omumumandu  
ingwi ngu va tjere:  
 "tji ma tuka nai nokasino  
kOvakwauti  
okasya  
kaUapona  
waKamungandjo  
kahi  
yaNgondokua  
kaKuvira  
kombwa  
yoruhuna  
okutja mave hene mave i kokure"  
nomuatje

waKaruaihe  
waTjipetekera  
ingwi waMuhanga  
wombamba  
yaTjitumb'  
ongova  
yamukaa  
Katito

omuatje  
womundu  
Omukwahere  
woyaKapumba  
komaere  
omaruru

omusya  
waKaembimbi  
kongwari  
yaMukumangua  
yomainya morukoro  
otjondwezu  
yaTjihongo

omuatje  
wongombe  
yavo  
ombapa  
yozonedera komatwi  
ndji mai sy' ourenga monganda  
poṅa pu ya rara  
aave nangaasi maku mave hene  
nangwari ke nakuhena  
me yekuṭira moye  
morui monganda  
otjomundu  
e nouatjiri

omuserandu  
ngu he ri omupenyenye  
omure  
ekuramenavakwao  
omuhon'  
orukoro  
otjowaKanjama  
ngu ma tjiti oupanga novanatje  
aayo ke nazondunge

omuhona  
ngu ha pindike  
ngu yora uriri  
wana

yaNauanga  
ya hepur' *onđiro*  
ye  
ai tja kai nakurara  
 menwandjou *ai hindi*  
*ovandu*  
vetatu  
mu mwa kaenda *omuatje*  
waKajatura  
waTjipetekera  
ingwi waMberera  
womukut'  
 ozongava  
nu mbu hi na zondjou  
nomuatje  
waTjizoo  
tjaHarangata  
womusuko  
waHei  
nomuatje  
waSeu  
ingwi waKangootui  
 kutja ve yende *kotjirongo*  
ku ma kapakwa  
 nu ve i pe omambo  
 nu opu ya tjita  
 ai utu okuza *momuhuka*  
 ngambeno *mondano*  
 yomuhuka  
ngandu mondano  
 yongurova  
tji mave i tji mave pizuka  
 ai paka *omuhona*  
womainya komeho  
*omburuuru*  
mu nga mu ɬa  
*ozongombe*  
zaMutamb'  
 okurooro  
*omuhona*  
*omburu*  
yana  
yaKomeheke  
*yozomburo*  
zaMauano  
yaTjomukoto

yOtjiherero  
 okunene uri okuhepa  
ya ungur' *oviungur'*  
                     ovinandengu  
                     kamaatu vi zembi  
  
*Tjikoto*  
             yaNamuisse  
*Tjiumbirua*  
             tjaHengombe  
na *Uzuuo*  
             yaHauanga

---

1      **Praise**

of the **radio**  
of Otjiherero  
when it made *years*  
                     *ten*  
                     of its existence  
inside the *country*  
                     of the *father*  
                             of *Kauakovere*  
   of the *dogs*  
   of Kuzema  
  
 the *country*  
             of the *father*  
                     of *Kaipita*  
                             of the *spotted-cows*  
                                     of the *mother*  
   of Matundu  
 the frank  
             that are on *uncle Kauatja*  
                                     of the *cattle*  
   of Rujore  
  
and amidst the *community*  
                     of Ovaherero  
 the *community*  
             old  
             that came from the *country*  
                                     with *palm-trees*  
   that do not dry  
                     and *reeds*  
                             that do not dry

2      It's it  
         the **radio**  
             of Otjiherero  
             the bull  
             the blackish-grey

that's *killing people because of news*  
like uncle *Hijauarungondo*  
the ugly  
of Nambaru  
of *Muniozondumbo*  
the climber  
who *is killing the people*  
because of a *bowl*  
of meat

- 3     **The male dog**  
of a dog  
that does not wag before a *hut*  
of a person  
if it does then *someone is chewing inside*  
when *chewing means*  
it's words that it is searching for

- 4     **The bull**  
the old  
that left its *tracks*  
in an *old homestead*  
of the *people*  
that are sacred

- 5     **(it) scattered tongue**  
of it  
and it is *heard everywhere*  
like the *child*  
of Humavindu  
and the *cattle*  
of Kozonjanda  
the greyish-white

- 6     *it's known*  
*it's well known*  
like courtship in a dry season  
and rain in rainy season  
like *Katjita*  
of Kandjoze  
who *is travelling amidst a group*  
of hounds  
yellowish  
while he is not hunting

- 7     **(it)'s praised in** accordance with *Ovakwendata*  
of the *house*  
big  
of the *cattle*  
in which *metal objects are praised*  
all sorts of  
people

with *bones*  
     *hard*  
     like those of birds  
 to which *Hongonekua* came  
     of the *oxen*  
         of *Ndero*  
     and *Kejaua*  
         of *Kamukandi*  
*mothers*  
     of *Nauanga*  
Ovakwendata  
     with the quivers  
     in which came *Tjiponda*  
         of *Kamakaruru*  
         of *Hijanangombe*  
         who had a bow  
             and quiver  
         who had a *shoe*  
             with a hole  
 the *hunter*  
     the excellent  
     with *dogs*  
         the *two*  
             that are  
             *Katjiurutjombungu*  
             and *Ndamberakuria*

8      **Listeners**

*children*  
         of my father  
         *newcomers*  
             my fellows  
     *OvaHerero*  
         who together with me crossed the *river*  
                     of the *snake*  
                     wide-awake

9      **It's a metal object**

like the *metal objects*  
         others  
         brought by the *person*  
             *son*  
             of *Nangeama*  
                 of *Hauanga*  
 the *chief*  
     who brought us to colonialism  
     but who brought us to *brightness*  
         to know how lands taste  
         and how they are reigned



the *chief*  
     with the *neck*  
         like a rifle  
who was born at *Otjizeva*  
                     at the *daughters*  
                     of *Kavipangaangero*  
                     the beautiful  
                     the *clumsy*  
                     like stupid people  
of the *mother*  
     of *Karumbi*  
         of *Muherero*  
*Tjiikumbua Tjiiningirua*  
     from the *fathers*  
         of *Uorumuna*  
         of the *cattle*  
                     of *Kandondu*  
                     liver of zebras  
                     liver of war  
*Tjiiningirua*  
     from the *fathers*  
         of *Korota*  
             of *war-cap*  
                 of *Muinjo*  
             of *Tjipurukisa*  
                 at the *things*  
                     of *Kamberipa*  
 the *homestead* is begged  
     from the *fathers*  
         of *Korota*  
             of *spear*  
                 of *Kauhinga*  
                 the soft  
                 which does not cut  
                                 a cloth  
he  
     who is *Samuel Maharero*  
         of the elder and taster  
         the *dry-meat*  
             of *Muua* and *Mutindi*  
         the *root*  
             of the *house*  
                 of *Tjondu*  
         when *praised*  
             who turns into his mothers

10      The radio  
             of *Otjiherero*

is old  
that announced *death and deaths*  
of persons  
*orphans and widows and widowers and favourites and outcasts*  
of the community  
this

that announced the *death*  
of the child  
of Kamuatjimbonde  
the chief  
with goiter  
like a calf  
who was born at *Okahurimehi*  
at the cattle  
of Kati  
of Karorua  
the *ox*  
piebald  
with horns only  
without body  
the *chief*  
who collected *people*  
when they returned from the *camps*  
of concentration  
of Chief Kaiser  
the *chief*  
of Kangu  
of the caprines  
of the ancestor Tjimanangombe  
his father  
*was born with chieftaincy*  
like nails on hands

- 11     **The radio**  
is that  
which announced the *death*  
of the child  
of the father  
of Karukua  
of the mother  
of Muvi  
the black  
of the lean-calves  
of Katjisemo  
the beautiful  
that were seen on lightning flashes
- 12     **(it) went** faraway  
when it went and brought tongues

- (it) caught the *tongue*  
of the *child*  
of *Kapika*  
of Hamanganda  
the chief  
who *does not die*  
like the *tree*  
of Rujombo
- 13 (it) **crossed** *Otjitunduuua*  
the *leopard*  
of the *mother*  
of Muambo  
the *strong-built*  
of Tjouṭuku  
which is said that *leopards*  
others migrate  
but it does not migrate
- 14 (it) **went** faraway  
(it) crossed in *Okaandjangombe*  
with sharp-pointed-stones  
at the *wild-cat*  
of Mbuima  
the light  
of Mbinge  
is left on the left-side  
at the water-point at the *place*  
where they drink
- 15 (it) **crossed** in the *sheep*  
of Tjiseua  
of Kambe  
the big  
that is on the *stranger*  
of Rukuma  
as if it is there
- 16 (it) also **walked** in the *valley*  
with anthills  
but that does not have graves  
with the *zebra*  
of the *mother*  
of Tjiuira  
the tame  
that *died*  
as if it sacrifices
- 17 (it) **walked** on the *grave*  
of the *child*  
of Tjirongo  
of Mbinge

of *Ndjere*  
of Kamuhonga  
the handsome  
who was seen by *baboons*  
of Omuhiva and Oruvango  
and they laughed  
they put on teeth  
the *slippery*  
like a rock  
the *shining*  
like a snake  
when he went in the *wagon*  
of *Samina*  
of Ndukuravirongo  
when he went to the *Hill*  
of Mbeti  
of Hamujemua  
that *throws its behind in deep-water*  
like the *crocodile*  
of Muakapumba  
he found the *old-women*  
of Ongokua  
who were too old and weak  
they cut grass on their knees  
he found the *cows*  
with spots on their bellies  
of the *father*  
of Tjerimba  
*standing side by side*  
like *heifers*  
of dogs  
when he went together with *child*  
of his  
*Ruvambi*  
of the *milk*  
given  
it's when they found the piebald *cows*  
*two*  
that *Kovikungo*  
of Nambuaja  
and that *Mujoro*  
of Katjindo

18      The radio

of Otjiherero  
the adventurer  
that *ventures*  
like a tree squirrel and *ground squirrel*

the grave-exhumer  
 and *person*  
     with badluck  
that *attends funerals*  
     as if it buries  
 19 (it) **stays** at *coronations*  
     of *children*  
         *chiefs*  
         different  
 it attended the *coronation*  
     of the *child*  
         of the *son*  
             of *Kavikua*  
                 of *Tjanda*  
                     of *Mauna*  
                         of *Maandomare*  
  
 the chief  
 the tall  
 the black  
 the *shining*  
     like the *Omuambo*  
         of *Kahumba*  
             of *Koviti*  
         with the shoe  
         who crossed the *springbok*  
             of *Kombango*  
             with the *cloth*  
                 of *Kauvari* on the back  
  
 his *father*  
     *old*  
         *uncle*  
             of his *father*  
                 of the *father*  
                     of his mother *Kahitjene*  
                         of *Muhoko*  
                         and *Nambungu*  
                             of *Kezeva*  
  
 the *child*  
     of *Riruako*  
 the *child*  
     of *Kuaima*  
         the father *Komuini* at *Osona*  
             at *cattle*  
                 of *Katenda*  
                 the greyish  
                 that is on him  
  
 20 (it) **crossed** the *river*

that is white  
with dust  
but without cattle  
 not crossed by a pregnant woman or the carrier  
 it looks nice at the *scorpions*  
                                   of Karikana  
                                   the patched-bellies  
 it looks nice at the *head*  
                                   of the ox  
                                   of Heuva  
                                   of Hambondi  
                                   of *Kapaha*  
                                   of the night-grazer  
                                   *cattle*  
                                   the ox  
                                   with spots low on the legs  
                                   of the *mothers*  
                                   of *Mbatjiua*  
                                   Mbatjiua  
                                   of the *cross-coloured* [ox]  
                                   of Katua

- 21     (it) passed through the *cattle*  
                                   of *Tjihungu*  
                                   of *Omukweyuva*  
                                   of the *house-of-Pera*  
                                   of the *sacred*  
                                   of Kaamba  
 the *not-knowing-it* say:  
       “what does it look for and where does it go”  
but it’s the *news-seeker*  
                                   of the *mother*  
                                   of Nauanga  
                                   *Nihova*  
                                   of the kudu  
and *Nihova*  
                                   of Mururu  
                                   the tall  
                                   with backs  
                                   who *milk for themselves*  
                                   while married  
                                   those *Kandiri*  
                                   of Tjitana  
                                   and *Kandiri*  
                                   of Mutambo  
  
                                   *Hava*  
                                   with buttocks  
                                   and *Hava*

- 22      with a long-neck  
 (it) **walked** in *Epako*  
           of the caprines  
           at the *calf*  
                   of Kaikondiruuma  
           at the *sacred-bird*  
                   of Kaeru  
                   with thin-legs  
                   that was killed at Otjinana  
           at the *zebra*  
                   of Toromba  
                   infertile  
                   that did not bear [offspring]  
           at the *homestead*  
                   of the *cattle*  
                           like elephants  
                   the *mate*  
                           of the *child*  
                                   of Kavikunua  
           at the *old-homestead*  
                   of *cattle*  
                           of ours  
                           the short  
                           with small spots on tails  
                           the strong-built  
                           with big bellies  
                           that are not tracked  
                           with the *wet-nose*  
                                   of the *mother*  
   of Tjiseua  
                   the *unripe berries*  
                           they are gathering quickly  
                   the *cattle*  
                           of Omumbanderu  
                                   of *mother*  
   of Kamburo  
                   the *cattle*  
                           of Nguvaiva  
                                   of Tjozohongo  
                           of Katua  
                                   of Kainakuva
- 23      while it **intended** to go to *Botswana*  
                   of the hats  
                   at the *leopard*  
                           of Kazaoro  
                   at the *umbilical-cord*  
                           of Kame

of the *cattle*  
of Tjitumba  
the guinea-fowl  
which had a *black hide*  
the beautiful  
that is on the *cattle*  
light black

24 also it **went** to the *pans*  
of salt  
which were seen by Tjombe  
Kambazu ran and hid them  
at the *sheep*  
of uncle Kambahoka  
at the *fence*  
for the games

25 but it is **heard** *faraway*  
at the *funnels*  
of Kapo and Ndjoura  
at the *cattle*  
of the Ombandi  
the yellowish  
at the *tracks*  
of the *cattle*  
of the *old-person*  
of *Karukua*  
the *sky*  
of ours  
beautiful  
he *should have climbed*  
but it does not have ladders  
it is not climbed  
it does not have ladders  
cattle  
*piebald and crossed-coloured*  
like the *bull*  
of *Murangere*  
of *Nanda*  
the *sheep*  
with goiter

26 (it) is still **heard** *inside*  
the *fence*  
of *Kahako*  
who had problems with *cattle*  
oxen  
now who is said he became rich  
he found the *children*  
of the *father*



of Mberera  
who ate them  
who had finished them  
of the *tree*  
 nice  
 the omongorwa *tree*  
which is not perfume  
children  
of the *father*  
of Teta  
of the *cattle*  
of ours  
 cross-coloured  
*shining white*  
like intestines  
*non-stumbled-at-night*  
like the *bull*  
of Kaseua  
of Tjivinga  
of Ndomba

27     (it) **went** faraway *faraway*  
           at the *land*  
           of *Kangombe*  
           who has the cattle  
           the *child*  
               of Ngura  
               of Tjitombo  
               of Ndjaramena  
           the father  
               of *Kambazombi*  
               of the *bull*  
               of Tjihama  
               the bull on head  
               the sacred-of-Rumana  
           the *chief*  
               with knob in head  
               who was *rich*  
                   [and] *not reached*  
                   like the palm tree on top  
           the *chief*  
               who *smoked*  
               like a woman  
               who *did not warm himself*  
               while cold *came*  
                                 from Omataura  
           the *son*  
               of *Katuse*

of *Tjivanda*  
of Ongwatjiya  
of the *daughter*  
of Kazongaru  
of Ngombe  
with sympathy  
who walked with knee-strap  
with *sympathy*  
when *she* says:  
"may I now cry or  
shout bushes burn at  
the same time"

the *land*  
chief  
of lands  
favourite  
of *lands*  
of Ovaherero  
because of the *death*  
of the *child*  
of Mbazombi  
the handsome  
the chief  
who *died*  
while he was not hated  
by people

28     **The tongue**

of it  
is still heard until now there *faraway*  
at the *old-homestead*  
of ours  
of adulthood at Otjandiha  
and *faraway*  
at the *father*  
of Ravindikua  
of the *leopard*  
of Kutera  
at *Kauaja*  
with the long-neck  
who *spoke*  
and answered himself  
answered himself  
uncle *Kakururume*  
of the *house*  
of the *wife*  
of Mbarangua  
*kept quiet*

as if there were  
no men

- 29 (it) is **heard** at *faraway*  
    at a *beautiful*  
        *place*  
            which was seen by *Kaumbangere*  
                of Tjombe  
            at the *piebald*  
                *two*  
                    that of piebald  
                        of Mutunda  
                            which died when was too old  
            and that piebald  
                of children  
                    of the father  
                        of Mbanda  
                            of the cloth  
                                the beautiful  
                                that Ndoni  
  named
- 30 (it) *gave birth to the news*  
    like the *scorpion*  
        of Kanguati
- 31 The **radio**  
    this  
    is big  
    you will *go around it*  
        like the *place*  
            of Mbambi  
                of Henda Katjiuo  
                    the Omukwatjivi  
                    who did not expose his genitals
- 32 (it)'s **full**  
    it became strong  
    it gives *excitement*  
        to children and adults  
        to orphans and widows  
            in which they find comfort  
            they found a *friend*  
                who is not tiresome  
                which breaks them from anxieties
- 33 where will you **miss it**  
    when you say:  
        "where was it"  
            in Otjiwarongo  
                with the railway  
                at the *cattle*

of Kambirongo  
with spots on jaws  
that is on the *chief*  
of Kaoko  
at the *old-homestead*  
of Kazombinde  
of Uamburu  
son  
of Kamuhao  
of the cavern  
it's still here until now  
it's heard  
34 then it announced the *death*  
of the *chief*  
with *hair on his eyes*  
like an *animal*  
of the wild  
a *climber*  
of others  
the tall  
with arms  
who is not clumsy tall  
who was seen by *women*  
of the *world*  
another  
faraway at Jamaica  
the *child*  
of the *children*  
of the *father*  
of *Karunga*  
of the *mother*  
of *Muvi*  
the black  
of the *calves*  
of Katjisemo  
that seen on flashes  
the *women*  
of ours  
the beautiful  
Ovakweyuva  
who slept behind the *homestead*  
of Maendo  
when they entered  
they were pretty with *children*  
in their carrying skins  
those who were seen by the *group*  
of Kautunja and stopped the journey

and settled in day light  
the *child*

of the *children*

of the *cattle*

of ours

of *Tjikange*

of the *well*

of *Munduva*

those that spoke *Kakundumane*

at the *leopard*

of *Kombango*

*he said:*

“When did I water them, bulls  
and cows and oxen of theirs, I  
saw them once when they  
drank and went up while  
water *dropped to the ground*  
from their beards”

the *child*

of the *cattle*

of theirs

the *reddish*

with *cups on mouths*

like the *bull*

of *Tjitendero*

the *oxen*

that are not turned by herders

with bad will

that are sacred

that *broke stone*

at the *light*

of *Mbinge*

at warmth and top

*my-father*

*father*

of *old-women*

who *limped accidentally*

at dawn *they went out*

for gathering

the *child*

the *nephew*

of *Tjijapa*

of *Karukua and Nangombe*

of the *cattle*

of *Munduva*

who *looked*

like anthills at *Ehangero*

and plains at crossing  
the *guide*  
who is said to *guide*  
when the goat at the homestead bleats  
and when the fire at the homestead flashes  
he guides with the *horse*  
of Hizembua  
with the *apron* soft  
he guides with the *dog*  
of Kozonde  
that of *Kaurindumbi*  
of *tall*  
of *Mure*  
of the *wife*  
of Ndero  
the *reddish*  
of Tjiuangombe  
the *short-stick*  
of Muatuje  
the *reddish*  
of ours  
the handsome  
that puts the stick on knee  
and says:  
“it breaks”  
it looks nice at the *wells*  
of ours  
of water in tunnels  
that is with the stranger  
of Kaivara  
the *child*  
of the *daughter*  
of *Kandirikirira*  
of the *narrowness*  
of Rukombo  
the *narrowness*  
of ours  
the beautiful  
the narrow  
where hands do not fit  
and neither palms  
the *child*  
the *nephew*  
of that person  
the strong-built  
who spent the morning with chest far

at *Otjandiha*  
     at the *old-homestead*  
         of ours  
         of adulthood  
     where *he was stamped*  
         with spears  
         and didn't run  
  
 the *child*  
     of the *daughter*  
         of that with *short-arms*  
             who jumped over the *well*  
                 of Okandjoze  
                 full  
                 and did die in it  
  
     the *reddish*  
         of the *fathers*  
             of Uazeua  
  
 the chief  
 the chief  
 the favourite  
and he was the *chief*  
     from whom we learned to reign  
 the *chief*  
     from whom we imitated walking  
 the *chief*  
     from whom we imitated respect and tidiness  
 the hero  
whom they said is a coward  
but how should a person be a *coward*  
     while he is praised in *Tjiheze*  
         *Omukwendata*  
         of the *mother*  
             of *Kamaneka*  
             of Nandu  
             of Ndauua  
             of Kamuhonga  
             *my-mother*  
                 the unsteady  
                 who shakes  
                 the calabash  
                 with her foot  
                 in *marriage*  
                 of Kozonjanda  
  
 the *last-born*  
     of the *children*  
         of Rukoze  
 the *chief*

who spoke words into the colonialists  
the year when the cattle died  
in which died the ox  
of Tjerije  
of Ngura  
the greyish  
among the greyishes  
the white  
among the whites  
he spoke once at the fence  
of Kahako  
who had problems  
with oxen  
the chief  
who does not become angry  
the son  
of Ngondivi  
of Kataura  
the grandchild  
of the homestead  
of Vingava  
of Ndjima  
the chief  
who said  
that blood does not rescue  
as if he has been in any war  
the chief  
from whom we asked water in the old-homestead  
of Kambao  
he spoke with O'Linn  
at Outjo  
of baboons  
in which entered Tjirire  
of Munduva  
of Mbinge  
Outjo  
the beautiful  
which he entered on his knees  
as if he was afraid  
we drank water in the old-homestead  
of ours  
we settled, we settled widely  
the next time we said:  
"we are hungry"  
he give us food  
we ate  
he fed the old



of his  
with *food*  
which he *got*  
from *missionaries*  
of English  
the sympathetic  
the *chief*  
who spoke slowly  
and they thought he would escape  
he is going to speak from outside  
like a coward  
whom they said:  
“when he flies like that  
with the *donkey*  
of Ovakwauti  
the *nephew*  
of *Uapona*  
of Kamungandjo  
of the *father*  
of Ngondokua  
of *Kuvira*  
of the *dog*  
of infertility  
that they will escape and go far”  
the *child*  
of *Karuaihe*  
of Tjipetekera  
that of *Muhanga*  
of the *ox*  
of Tjitumba  
with *narrow horns*  
of the *wife*  
of Katito  
the *child*  
of the *person*  
of Omukwahere  
of Kapumba  
of *soured-milk*  
sour  
the *nephew*  
of Kaembimbi  
of the *francolin*  
of Mukumangua  
with *feathers on chest*  
like the *bull*  
of Tjihongo  
the *child*

of the *ox*  
of theirs  
white with spots on ears  
that left *decorations*  
in the *homestead*  
where it slept  
they thought that *they will escape*  
but he did not escape  
he will die in *his* [place]  
at the waterpoint in his homestead  
like a *person*  
who has truthfulness  
the red  
who is not yellowish-red  
the *tall*  
standing-over-others  
the *chief*  
[with] the *chest*  
like that of Kanjama  
who made *friendship with children*  
like he does not have intelligence  
the *chief*  
who does not became angry  
who always laughs  
the *son*  
of Nauanga  
it announced the *death*  
of his  
it said it will not sleep  
early in the morning  
it sent *persons*  
*three*  
with which went  
the *child*  
of *Kajatura*  
of *Tjipetekera*  
that of *Mberera*  
of the *valley*  
of rhinoceroses  
without elephants  
and the *child*  
of *Tjizoo*  
of *Harangata*  
of *daughter*  
of *Hei*  
and the *child*  
of *Seu*

that of Kangootui  
so that they may go to a *place*  
where he will be buried  
and give it news  
and it did so  
it started from *morning*  
perhaps at *five*  
in the morning  
until *five*  
in the evening  
when they left  
when they left completely  
it buried the *chief*  
with hairs on his eyes  
*cunningness*  
in which die the *cattle*  
of Mutambo  
in the rainy season  
the *chief*  
the *gentle-man*  
of the *mother*  
of Komeheke  
of the *sources*  
of *Mauano*  
of Tjomukoto

35 It's radio

of Otjiherero  
thank you very much  
it did *deeds*  
important  
which will not be forgotten  
*Tjikoto*  
of Namuise  
*Tjiumbirua*  
of Hengombe  
and *Uzuno*  
of Hauanga

(Transcribed from a tape from the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, my translation)

Because of lack of space this text is not discussed in detail as it is done with the discussions of the preceding texts. Here the most important relations are discussed.

Epithet 1

This is an introductory epithet which introduces the praise as a whole, discussing what and why the oral poet praises. This is a phenomenon that occurs in this praise only. All other praises describe or praise the referent directly without an introduction. Although this phenomenon is new in the praise tradition, it follows the common abstract structural pattern of praises which has been introduced here.

In this case such an introduction is vital because it was the first time for the Otjiherero broadcasting service to be praised. This praise was heard for the first time through the Otjiherero radio service and was a creation of the oral poet himself, since he is the only person who has created a praise of the Otjiherero radio service.

#### **Praise: radio**

Here the oral poet starts with the word *omuṭandu* 'praise' that introduces the praise to the listeners. This word serves as an introductory device that introduces the fact that what is going to follow is a praise of the radio service.

#### **Radio: Otjiherero**

The Namibia Broadcasting Corporation hosts at least one radio service for each individual language spoken in Namibia. This relation as part of the introduction specifies the particular radio service in focus. This may be regarded as an answer to the question: what is being praised?

#### *Radio: years*

The purpose of praising the radio here is that it was its first anniversary, as the oral poet puts it 'it made ten years of its existence'. This radio service started its broadcasting programmes in the early 70's and in the early 80's its first anniversary was celebrated. On that day Mr Kaputu, who is still one of the announcers, created and chanted (or performed) this praise for the first time. This may be regarded as

an answer to the question: why does the oral poet praise it?

*Radio: country*

The first anniversary of its existence is celebrated, but the radio service did not exist in a vacuum. The praise of the country in which it functions is included here. This is just an inclusion of the praise of Namibia as the name Namibia is not mentioned here, but the listeners can infer from the fact that they know conventionally that what is praised in that way is our country, Namibia. A detailed discussion of this type of periphrastic description is given in chapter 11, section 11.1.11.

*Country: Kauakovere & Kaipita*

This country is praised as belonging to the father of Kauakovere and the father of Kaipita. Probably they were two of those ancestors who led the migration into Namibia or into the central part of Namibia. Parts of praises of these two individuals are embedded. The country is thus praised in accordance with these two men, each of which is praised in his own way. The praise of Namibia comprises the praises of these two individuals. The praise of the father of Kaipita is much longer than that of the father of Kauakovere. The use of the phrase *hi ya...* 'father of ...' is explained under the periphrastic description in chapter 11, section 11.1.11.

*Radio: community*

The spatial setting in which the radio service operates is narrowed down to a particular community. We have different ethnic communities in Namibia. Thus the oral poet seems to feel obliged to specify the particular community served by this radio service. He relates the radio service to the community in which it functions, i.e. the Ovaherero community.

In this relation the oral poet praises this community as an old one which had come from a country with palm trees and reeds that do not dry out. This is the way Ovaherero praise their country of origin, but it is not known with precision where it is situated. According to Sundermeier (1986:5),

“Their original home was a place of reeds.... According to the old traditions, three groups migrated from this land. The first to leave were the Ovambo; then Herero left, and finally the Mbanderu”.

## **Epithet 2**

### **It's it: radio**

In this epithet the keyword slot is preceded by an emphatic expression, *ondji ri yo* ‘it's it’.

This emphatic expression, *ondji ri yo*, occurs also in the Maharero praise (epithet 3, 9, 18, 19, and 20), *ongu ri ye* ‘it's him’, differing in syntactic properties only. The *ondji* and *ongu* are identical in meaning but differ in their reference function. The *ondji* refers to the nominal class *o(N)*- (noun class 9) while *ongu* refers to the nominal *omu*- (noun class 1). In the same way *yo* and *ye* refer to these nominal classes respectively. They are pronouns in object positions representing a human being (Maharero) and an object (radio).

In the praise of the radio, the emphatic expression is immediately followed by a repetition of the referent as the keyword. In the Maharero praise it is followed by a complement that modifies it. In the Maharero praise the pronoun *ye* ‘him’ in the emphatic clause is boldfaced to mark it as the pronominal keyword in that slot, while it also contributes to the emphasis. In this praise the *yo* ‘it’ is not marked as a pronominal keyword, but the word *oradio* ‘radio’ is marked as the keyword. It is, however, possible for both to be marked as keywords. The *yo* ‘it’ is stronger

than *ye* 'he' because the former is very close to the word it emphasizes. See chapter 11, section 11.1.7 for further discussion of emphasis.

*Radio: Otjiherero*

As explained in epithet 1.

*Radio: bull*

The symbolic meaning of the term bull contributes in praises to the state of strength and bravery, as already explained. It fits well with the description of Kahimemua<sup>81</sup> as a bull, since both are animate and it is easy to recognise the common ground. In this case the oral poet ascribes this attribute to an inanimate object, and so describing the ambition of the radio service. Because of its ambitious announcers or reporters who keep it alive every time, it is praised as being strong and brave. In this sense it is described as a bull.

*Radio: blackish-grey*

The term *otjizororovazu* 'blackish-grey' is a compound adjective. It is composed of *otji* + *zoro* 'black' + *rovazu* 'grey'. The use of prefix *otji-* contributes a derogatory meaning. The derogatory description is discussed in chapter 11, section 11.1.9.

The oral poet refers to the radio as blackish-grey because it is hosted in a greyish building. This building is built with grey bricks. Or possibly the oral poet himself has or had a blackish grey radio box which he had in mind when he was creating this praise.

*Radio: people*

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<sup>81</sup> This occurs in the praise of the Ekwatjivi matrilineage, epithet 9.

The announcers travel around the community searching for news to be broadcast. They ask individuals to give them news, conduct interviews, and invite individuals or groups to go to the radio in person for live broadcasting. Some people refuse to cooperate because they are afraid of being heard over the radio. They argue that they will remain speaking in the radio after their deaths. In one way or another the reporters encourage people to give news-items, thus the radio is always hunting for information. In this sense the oral poet praises it as killing people because of news like uncle Hijauarungondo who was known for his greedy eating habits - his excessive desire for food, especially meat. His bowl of meat was set aside and nobody was allowed to eat from it or even to touch it. The last part of this epithet is occupied by the included praise of uncle Hijauarungondo. The praise of Hijauarungondo is also included in the praise of the Ekwatjivi matrilineage, epithet 6.

### **Epithet 3**

#### **Radio: male dog**

The oral poet metaphorically refers to the radio as the male dog. The word *ondumewa* is a compound noun composed of *o(N)* + *rume* 'male' + *wa* 'dog'. This metaphor is clarified in the discussions of the relations that will follow.

#### *Male dog: dog*

Here the oral poet redundantly describes the male dog as a dog. This is redundant because a male dog is automatically a dog as shown in the construction of the word *ondumewa* 'male dog' above.

#### *Male dog: house*

Because of its well developed sense of smell, a dog is a good detector of a place where people are eating. After a dog has detected where people are eating it



comes and stands nearby and wags its tail. If people are eating inside a house or hut it will stand close to the doorway and wag its tail. This is an indication that people are eating inside the house. A passer-by will definitely know that somebody is eating inside the specific house from the tail wagging habit of the dog.

Similarly, the reporters have a nose for places where they might find news information. If a passer-by finds a news reporter he can tell that there is something reportworthy.

#### **Epithet 4**

##### **Radio: bull**

As explained above under epithet 2.

*Bull: old*

One may wonder why the oral poet describes the radio as an old bull here, while it is just ten years old. The old age does not mean that it is physically old, but refers to its lengthy experience. This will become clear in the next relation.

*Bull: tracks*

Radio reporters are always hunting for news. They travel extensively to get to places where they can find news information. For this reason they leave their tracks everywhere, and accumulate huge travelling experiences. Therefore the oral poet praises the radio saying that it left its track in the abandoned homesteads of sacred people. This means that it has been everywhere, be it sacred or secular.

#### **Epithet 5**

##### **Radio: tongue**

When news is read or an announcement is broadcast, it is simultaneously heard everywhere. The term *eraka* 'tongue' means the voice of the announcer as aired during broadcasting. In this way 'its' tongue is scattered all over the whole country. It popularized its voice and became a popular source of information.

*Tongue: child & ox*

Its popularity is known everywhere like famous figures, such as the child of Humavingu and the ox of Kozonjanda which were figures of high standing in the community. The son of Humavingu was well known because of his impressive style of expressing himself and singing. The ox of Kozonjanda was popular because of its nice lowing sound. In this sense the popularity of the voice of the Otjiherero radio service is compared to popular voices of these two figures.

#### **Epithet 6**

As in epithet 5, this epithet emphasizes the popularity of the Otjiherero radio service.

#### **Radio: known**

Here the oral poet uses the poetic style of harnessing synonyms, in this case synonymous clauses. The technique of harnessing synonyms is explained in detail in chapter 11, section 11.1.13. Although in this case this may be viewed as repetition, the second verb, *tjiukwa* 'well known' is used to emphasize the first verb, i.e. *iwe* 'known'. In ordinary speech such an arrangement of clauses may definitely be seen as repetition, because both verbs are derived from the base or root, *-tjiw-* 'know'. In ordinary speech their immediate succession, one after the other would be meaningless. In praises such a semantic repetition is a valuable technique specifically for the purpose of emphasis.

*Radio: courtship, rain & Katjita*

The popularity of the radio service is obvious, like courtship in the dry season and rain in the rainy season and Katjita the son of Kandjoze. The Ovaherero are pastoralists and observe that during the dry season courtship among their herds does not take place as the pasture becomes dry and less nutritious, and the bulls normally isolate themselves from the herd. During the rainy season, on the other hand, everyone expects the rain to fall, though sometimes drought may strike.

Katjita, the son of Kandjoze, was a well known hunter who reared a large number of hounds for hunting. His hounds accompanied him everywhere he went. It became known that when you see somebody amidst hounds then it must be Katjita the son of Kandjoze. In other words being amidst hounds became his characteristic and everyone knew him for it. Once again the oral poet compares the obviousness of Katjita among his hounds with the obvious popularity of the Otjiherero radio service.

### **Epithet 7**

#### **Radio: Ovakwendata**

The oral poet states that the radio service is praised in accordance with the Ekwendata matrilineage. This is to justify the inclusion of a praise of this matrilineage.

#### *Ovakwendata: house*

As explained in chapter 5, section 5.1, this matrilineage consists of two branches or sub-lineages known as *ondjuwo onene* 'big house' and *ondjuwo okaṭṭiṭi* 'small house'. Now the oral poet specifies that the radio service is being praised according to the Ovakwendata, those of the big house which is also praised as has having many cattle. This means that the members of this sub-matrilineage are rich in cattle.

Further on he states that all sorts of metal object (or metal artifacts) are praised in this way, hence the radio as a metal object, is praised as such.

*Ovakwendata: people*

After the ground is established, as explained in the above relations, the oral poet starts to praise the radio with the praise of the Ekwendata sub-matrilineage. He praises them as having hard bones like birds.

In our culture it is believed that a strong built person has hard bones. Birds, especially guinea-fowl, are believed to have hard bones in contrast to their body size. The members of this sub-matrilineage are praised as characteristically having strongly built bodies. Among these members there was Hongonekua of the ox of Nḡero and Kajaua of Kamukandi. They were well known members of this sub-matrilineage with high profiles, and their praises are included in the praise of their matrilineage.

*Ovakwendata: mothers*

Among these members there were those who were known as the mothers of Nauanga who were also known as the Ovakwendata with quivers. Among these Ovakwendata with quivers there was the popular hunter, Tjiponda. This epithet ends with an included part of the praise of Tjiponda (cf. Appendix 4, epithet 3 and 8).

In this epithet the oral poet includes men of high standing in the community and their praises, such as Hongonekua, Kejaua and Tjiponda. This is a characteristic of praises to include praises of men or women of high profile in praises of their relatives, or anything or something associated with them or something associated with those who are linked or associated with them in one way or another. These are direct and/or indirect inclusions.

## Epithet 8

In contrast to epithets in other praises, this one prepares the ground for the next. This praise is performed in a particular context which differs from the traditional social contexts in which praises are normally performed. Information in some epithets in this praise flows from and into preceding and following epithets respectively, like paragraphs do in an essay.

### Radio: listeners

In this epithet the oral poet, also the announcer, addresses the listeners. He uses the vocative form, *vapuratene* 'listeners!' instead of its normal form *ovapuratene* 'listeners'. He is in direct communication with listeners over the air, thus he addresses them directly.

#### *Listeners: children*

He addresses listeners as children of his father, since the Ovaherero are related to one another through the common founder or ancestor of this ethnic group. Although that particular relationship is distant and cannot be traced, it is believed that all the members are related in one way or another. In this context, Ovaherero use the proverb, *ovakuru va zire kumwe* lit. 'elders came from a common ancestor' that means that their ancestors sprang from the same common ancestor. Although they cannot trace their exact relationship, they are convinced that their ancestors were related. In this relation the word *ovanatje* 'children' does not refer to the young ones, but to all Ovaherero as descendants of a common ancestor.

#### *Children: fellow newcomers*

The Ovaherero originally migrated to Namibia from further north in Africa, from a country known as a place of reeds and palm trees, as explained in epithet 1 of this praise. It is believed that all Ovaherero crossed the river with wide-awake, big and

furious snakes. The name of this river is not named here, but we infer from its praise that it is the Kunene river. They crossed this river at Okarundu kaMbeti 'Hill of Mbeti' as praised and explained in the introduction.

## **Epithet 9**

### **Radio: metal object**

As the ground is established in the preceding epithet, the oral poet starts with the emphatic particle *ona* which may be translated with 'it is ..'. With this, the oral poet wants the listeners to know that what he praises is a metal artifact like other metal artifacts. The comparison of the radio with other metal artifacts is explained in the following relation.

#### *Metal object: Samuel Maharero*

Most steel and metal objects were introduced to the Ovaherero by the missionaries. Here the oral poet compares the radio to the guns (as the other metal artifacts), because he wants to emphasize the guns which the Ovaherero bought during the reign of Samuel Maharero<sup>82</sup>, especially between 1898 and 1904, as they were preparing for the battle against the Germans. In this battle the Germans almost exterminated the Ovaherero.

The rest of this epithet is dominated by an included part of the praise of Samuel Maharero. First he is introduced as the person of the mother of Nangeama and Nangeama of Hauanga, people he was related to. Further on he praises Samuel Maharero as the chief who brought or led the community into German colonialism, during whose reign the Germans colonised Namibia. His efforts to resist the Germans failed and he fled to Botswana where he died on 14 March 1923. His

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<sup>82</sup> For detailed history of the war during Samuel Maharero's reign, see Pool (1991) and Gewald (1999).

remains were returned to Namibia and were buried alongside his father Maharero and his grandfather Tjamuaha in Okahandja on 26 August 1923. The oral poet alludes to colonialism in the relative clause *ngwe tu yeta kohuurire* 'who brought us to colonialism'.

The oral poet states that he did not only bring us to colonialism but he also taught us how countries taste and how they are reigned. The taste the oral poet refers to in this epithet is the painful feeling brought about by Germany and its colonialists and colonists. Samuel Maharero was the chief who led the community during one of the most difficult periods.

*Samuel Maharero: neck*

In this relation the oral poet describes Samuel Maharero as having a characteristically long, round neck like a rifle (or a gun with a long barrel). This comparison also reveals that during his reign rifles and guns were the order of the day.

*Samuel Maharero: birth*

Samuel Maharero was born at Otjizeva in the year of the homestead of Heuva<sup>83</sup>. After the introduction of his place of birth the oral poet goes on to praise it.

*Samuel Maharero: son*

In this relation the oral poet relates him to two of his numerous relatives, Karumbi and Muherero.

*Samuel Maharero: Tjiikumbua Tjiiningirua*

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<sup>83</sup> This year is possibly inaccurate, because the Ovaherero "did not record the day and date of such events" (Pool 1991:9). Missionaries Irle (1906) and Vedder (1938) recorded this year as 1856 and 1857 respectively.

This is a relation of Samuel Maharero and his names. Pool (1991:9) writes about his names as follows:

“Samuel Maharero’s real Herero name was Uereani. (The Herero word ‘Ourihuuna’ apparently means ‘barefoot’ and is allegedly the Herero nickname for Samuel Maharero). Amongst his fellow-Hereros Samuel was also known as Katjikumbua or Katjikumua<sup>84</sup> [sic].”

Tjiikumbua and Tjiiningirua, as they occur in this epithet, are actually not two names, but synonyms. Here they are only used in the form of harnessing synonyms (a common structural feature in Otjiherero praises). From this, we infer that these were his praise name(s). These names morpho-syntactically consist of an adverbial particle *tji-* ‘how/when’, class marker *-i-* (refers to noun class 9), verb radicals *-kumb-* and *-ningir-* ‘beg/ask’ plus passive morpheme *-wa*. The class marker refers to the word *ondwa* meaning community or household. Both verb radicals mean ask or beg, but today the *-kumb-* has gained religious connotations and it is used in prayer. The passive morpheme turns an active verb into a passive verb. Both names mean that the community or household was begged.

Samuel Maharero was born in the period when the Ovaherero under the leadership of his father Maharero were under the despotism of Jonker Afrikaner. During this period his father was conceiving ways or plans which he would use to free his community from the yoke of the Nama dictator. Ironically, he praised his son as ‘How-community-is-begged/asked’ to be freed from the despotic rule of Jonker Afrikaner and his Oorlams ally.

Furthermore the oral poet includes the praises of Jonker Afrikaner and Hendrik Witbooi, the Nama and Oorlams leaders respectively. In accordance with the praise tradition, both are praised through their sons. None of these leaders’ names occur in the praise. Jonker Afrikaner is praised as ‘father of Uorumuṅa’. Uorumuṅa is the Otjiherero name for the son of Jonker Afrikaner, Christian

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<sup>84</sup>

The correct spelling is Katjiikumbua.



Afrikaner. The oral poet continues to praise him as the one who raided the Ovaherero's cattle on horseback and in heavy battles. The term *ozongoro* 'zebras' in this epithet means horses. Hendrik Witbooi is praised as 'father of Korota<sup>85</sup> with the warrior cap of Muinjo of Tjipurukisa ...'. Eventually, towards the end of this epithet the oral poet mentions the name 'Samuela Maharero'. To his name, he adds another part of his praise.

In this epithet the oral poet makes clear that the Nama and Oorlams raided the Ovaherero of their cattle, because they were powerful. Thus, Samuel Maharero's names beg them to leave the Ovaherero in peace.

*Samuel Maharero: praise*

As already explained the clause *okuyamwa ngu ma yaruka mooina* lit. 'to be praised he returns into his mothers' is identical to *otjiyano* (the basic praise). It means that he and his paternal grandfather belonged to the same matrilineage, and consequently Samuel Maharero was praised according to his own matrilineage.

**Epithet 10**

**Radio: Otjiherero**

As explained under epithet 1.

*Radio: old*

This relationship does not actually mean that the radio is old. The oral poet praises it because it was its first anniversary. However with this relation he means that it accomplished a great deal within a short period of time. Some of its deeds occur in the next relations.

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<sup>85</sup>

Korota is a loanword from Afrikaans 'kort' meaning a person with short stature.

*Radio: deaths*

Most deaths are announced on the radio. There is a daily programme called *omatjivisiro wozondiro* 'announcement of deaths' in which deaths are announced.

*Death: Hosea Kuṭako*<sup>86</sup>

The oral poet praises those persons whose deaths were announced. One of them whose praise occupies this epithet was Chief Hosea Kuṭako. Once again his name is not mentioned, but we infer from his praise that a person praised in that way is our late Chief Hosea Kuṭako who reigned over the Ovaherero after Samuel Maharero fled to Botswana and stayed there until his death in 1923. In the praise of Chief Hosea Kuṭako the oral poet includes the clause 'chief who gathered people when they came out of the concentration camps of Chief Kaiser<sup>87</sup>'. After the extermination campaign, those Ovaherero who survived were put and kept in concentration camps as prisoners of war and some executed. In this epithet the oral poet means that Chief Hosea Kuṭako was the chief who rebuilt the community after the war.

**Epithet 11**

This epithet is an extension of epithet 10, because both are about announcements of deaths, but of different persons.

*Radio: death*

The radio also announced the death of the person whose praise is included here,

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<sup>86</sup> Some parts of the praise of Chief Hosea Kuṭako are analysed in the praise of Okahandja, version C, epithet 4. For the description of his leadership qualities see Kerina (1981).

<sup>87</sup> This refers to Kaiser Wilhelm II who was the German Emperor during this period.

but I failed to infer his name from his praise.

### **Epithet 12**

The epithet 12 to 17 and 20 to 24 are about the radio's journeys in its efforts at gathering news items. With the exception of epithet 12, each of the other epithets represents a praise of a place visited.

#### **Radio: faraway & tongue**

The radio went faraway and tape recorded the voice of the late Chief Muniomuhoro Kapika<sup>88</sup>. The place where the radio went is just referred to as 'faraway', and the term tongue heads the praise of Chief Muniomuhoro Kapika. As we know Chief Muniomuhoro Kapika resided in Kaokoland<sup>89</sup> and, as we can infer from the next epithets, the term 'faraway' refers to Kaokoland. This epithet is dominated by the included part of the praise of Chief Muniomuhoro Kapika. The oral poet praises him as the 'chief who did not die like the tree of Rujombo', meaning that he was very old when he died in the early 80's.

### **Epithet 13**

#### **Radio: Otjitunduuua**

The radio crossed the place named Otjitunduuua that is praised in this epithet. This place is in Kaokoland, about 30 km on the west side from the gravel road to

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<sup>88</sup> He was the father of the present Chief Hikuminue Kapika who is well known for his opposition to the Epupa hydroelectric project. Hikuminue Kapika and Paulus Tjavara visited Europe in June and July 1998 in their effort to stop the international communities' support for the project. For detail see website <http://www.namibian.com.na/Netstories/Environ2.98/epupaupdate.html>

<sup>89</sup> Kaokoland is where Ovahimba (Himba) reside, and it is approximately 800 km northwest of Windhoek where the radio is stationed. It is relatively faraway.

Ruacana. It is close to Ekango with the Otjondeka road. In this place there was a leopard which stayed in this place for a long time. It ate goats, sheep and calves of Muambo, the strongly-built, of Tjouṭuku. For this reason this place is praised in this way.

#### **Epithet 14**

##### **Radio: Kamanjab (Okamanja)**

In this epithet we find two parts of praises of two different places. The radio crossed Kamanjab, which is here referred to by its Otjiherero name, Okaandjangombe. The first part is the praise of Kamanjab and the second is of the praise of Ombombo. The name of the second place is not mentioned. The part of the praise of Ombombo is classified as part of this epithet because it is attached to the end of the part of the praise of Kamanjab. The oral poet says that Ombombo was to the left of Kamanjab. The radio did not go to Ombombo, but the oral poet alludes to it in passing.

#### **Epithet 15**

##### **Radio: Opuwo**

A place known as Opuwo, a hometown of Kaokoland, is praised in this epithet. In this place there was a very fat sheep that belonged to Tjiseua and Kambe. When a certain child of Rukuma died, it was slaughtered and its horns were placed on his grave. Normally horns of oxen were placed on the graves of wealthy owners, but for a poor person the horns of a ram were sufficient. In praises, when an ox or sheep is said to be on somebody, that means that its horns are placed on his grave.

#### **Epithet 16**

### **Radio: valley<sup>90</sup>**

This is actually a dry watercourse where water flows only during the rainy seasons. In this valley there were a lot of anthills but no graves. Now there are graves because people have settled there permanently. In earlier times people settled there during the rainy seasons and moved back to places with springs like Okorosave, Otavi and Ombombo. This valley is associated with a certain horse which was very tame and loved by its owner. A few days after the death of its owner, it also died which is why it is praised since it died as if it were sacrificed.

### **Epithet 17**

#### **Radio: grave**

The radio visited the grave of the person the oral poet praises in this epithet. This epithet consists of a praise of that person in detail. The details of this person are discussed in the following relations.

#### *Grave: Oorlog (Vita) Tom<sup>91</sup>*

Gewald (1999:207) describes Oorlog Vita Tom and his followers in the following quotation.

“In the late nineteenth century, Vita Tom, or Kaptein Oorlog (War) as he was also known, had established himself as a war-lord in southern Angola. Vita Tom was the son of one of the daughters of a sister of Manasse Tjisiseta<sup>92</sup> [sic], the most powerful chief of Omaruru, and brought up by one of Manasse’s sisters; therefore he was extremely closely related to the Omaruru elite. With the outbreak of the Herero-German war, Vita Tom was joined in southern Angola by large numbers of refugees from Omaruru. During the early 1900s Vita Tom and his forces regularly

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<sup>90</sup> The valley that is praised here is where I grew up, and where my parents still live.

<sup>91</sup> For detail discussion of Oorlog Vita Tom, see Stals and Otto-Reiner 1990.

<sup>92</sup> The correct spelling is Tjiseseta.

fought alongside Portuguese and Angolan Boer forces in battles against Ovambo kingdoms. During these expeditions large numbers of Herero who had fled to the Ovambo kingdoms were captured and absorbed into the following of Vita Tom. Amongst the better-known Herero who became followers of Vita Tom in this way were Salatiel Kambazembi, formerly of Waterberg, and Thomas Mutate, formerly Omaruru.”

Oorlog Vita Tom was born in 1863 in Omaruru district. His father was an Omutjawana (Batswana - Setswana speaker). Together with his followers, he migrated from Omaruru district to the north, probably in search of his father who went there. He proceeded until he arrived in Angola where he allied with the Portuguese to raid and subdue the Ovambo and other chiefs in southern Angola. In Angola some Ovahimba joined him for military gain (especially for cattle from raids) and he gained a considerable number of followers. According to Bollig (1997:19), he left Angola in 1915 “with a mixed group of Bushmen, Nama, Himba and Herero (in early colonial reports frequently designated as ‘Oorlamse men’”. In 1917 he settled at Otjijandjasemo in Kaokoland where the South African government recognised him together with Muhonakaṭiti and Kaheuanaua (Kakurukouje’s successor) as chiefs in Kaokoland, though their chieftaincies were not recognised by the southern Ovaherero (mainly those who were known as Ovatjimba). See Bollig (1997: 23-9).

Oorlog Vita Tom died in 1937 in Ovamboland and was buried there. In the early 1980's his remains were exhumed and reburied in Opuwo. In this epithet the oral poet refers to Opuwo as the place of his burial. He does not praise the place (as it is already praised in epithet 15) in which he was reburied, but he praises Oorlog Vita Tom himself. First he relates him to four of his ancestors. Secondly he describes his physical characteristics saying he was handsome. He was seen by the baboons and because of his good looking figures they ‘laughed, put on teeth’. In this description to laugh and to put on teeth (or bare their teeth) are synonymous. Once again we see here a strategy of harnessing synonyms. His physical traits, smoothness and lustre of skin, are likened to a rock and snake respectively. Thirdly he describes how he went to Angola. He went in the wagon of Samina of Ndukuravirongo who was a well known wagon driver in Oorlog Vita Tom’s

migration to the north. He went to Okarundu kaMbeti 'Hill of Mbeti', the praise of which is included here. In its praise it is related to Mbeti and Hamujemua, and it is said to stand in the water like a crocodile, because it stands close to the Kunene river. As already explained, this hill is situated north of Ruacana in Angola. Fourthly he found old women at Ongokua<sup>93</sup> who were old and weak. Here the clauses *awa kurupa* 'while they were old' and *awa nonopara* 'while they weakened' are synonymously harnessed. Fifthly in Angola he found two black cows with white spots on their bellies. According to the oral poet these cows were standing side by side like dogs' heifers (or young bitches). Lastly, he saw these cows when he went to Angola together with his son Ruvambi.

### **Epithet 18**

#### **Radio: Otjiherero**

As explained in epithet 1.

*Radio: adventurer*

The radio is a roamer which wanders from place to place in search of news, to and fro over every corner where the Otjiherero speaking people reside. Therefore it is compared here to the tree squirrel and ground squirrel which are found almost everywhere in Namibia. Here the oral poet describes the ground squirrel as a grave-exhumer with its sharp nails. He also compares the radio to a person who ventures aimlessly.

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<sup>93</sup> Ongokua (spelt Ongokwa) is a place in Angola, see map 1 in Bollig (1997:8).

## Epithet 19

### Radio: coronations of chiefs

The radio witnessed the coronations of different chiefs. It sent representatives to witness and report on these coronation processes of many Ovaherero chiefs. One of the chiefs whose coronation was attended is praised in this epithet: Chief Kuaima Riruako.

#### *Coronation: Chief Kuaima Riruako*

Chief Kuaima Riruako is the present paramount chief of Ovaherero, although his paramountcy is not recognised by some Ovambanderu<sup>94</sup>. Chief Kuaima Riruako succeeded Chief Clemens Kapuuu who was assassinated in 1978. In the early 80's Chief Kuaima Riruako was crowned as the paramount chief at Okahitua in the Ozonahi reserve.

Firstly the oral poet praises Chief Kuaima Riruako with the same part as he praises Chief Hosea Kuṭako in the Okahandja praise, version C epithet 4. At first sight one may assume that he is praising Chief Hosea Kuṭako again, but the name of the person praised is mentioned in the last description. Chiefs Hosea Kuṭako and Kuaima Riruako share a part of their praise, because they are closely related. During Chief Hosea Kuṭako's coronation, the radio was not in existence. The oral poet describes Chief Kuaima Riruako physically as tall, black and shining. His physique is likened to that of Kahitjeṇe, parts of whose praise are included here. Kahitjeṇe's praise is analysed under the praise of the Ovakwatjivi matrilineage epithet 16. The oral poet likens him to Kahitjeṇe, because Kahitjeṇe was an uncle to his mother's father. In the last description the oral poet relates him to his ancestor Riruako (presently his surname) and Kuaima (his grandparent after whom

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<sup>94</sup> Ovambanderu's Chief Munjuku Nguvauva II is recognised by some Ovambanderu as their paramount chief, in opposition to Chief Kuaima Riruako.



he was named) and Komuini who was buried at Osona, approximately 15 km south of Okahandja where presently the Namibian Defence Force camp is situated.

### **Epithet 20**

#### **Radio: river**

This epithet contains a praise of the Omaruru river. This is a wide river the bed of which is covered with thick and soft white sand. The oral poet refers to its white colour as the dust. Normally when cattle walk to a waterpoint they make dust, and this is compared to the white colour of the river bed. Since this sand is difficult to walk across, it is why the oral poet states that 'it is not crossed by a pregnant woman nor one who has a baby on her back', because they are already burdened. Further on the oral poet includes two parts of praises of surrounding places with the introductory clause '*amaku munika nawa k...* 'while it looks well at ...'.

### **Epithet 21**

#### **Radio: cattle**

The radio crossed the place that is praised as 'in cattle of Tjihungu ...'. I cannot infer its name from the praise. When the radio came to this place, people had been wondering about what it was looking for and where it was going. The oral poet answers these questions by stating that 'it is the news-seeker' and praises with another part of the Ekwendata matrilineage as he has done in epithet 7 of this praise.

### **Epithet 22**

#### **Radio: Epako (Gobabis)**

The radio also visited the Epako. Epako is the Otjiherero name for Gobabis

meaning 'a place or valley between mountains'. This epithet deals in detail with the praise of the Epako.

*Epako: bird*

The oral poet praises this place in different ways. In this relation the oral poet metaphorically uses the word *ondera* 'bird' to refer to a locust. The common ground between the locust and the bird is that they both fly. The thin legs of the locust are derogatorily described here, with the use of noun class prefix *ou-* (class 14). This place was once struck by a swarm of locusts which consumed all the vegetation they encountered. The people had been struggling to kill them and took several days, eventually managing to kill them at a place known as Otjinana.

*Epako: mare of Toromba*

The oral poet praises this place further as 'at the mare of Toromba ...'. Toromba, a resident of this place, had a thin infertile mare. This mare was fast and outran other horses. In this relation the oral poet uses the word *orungwini* 'infertile' and the relative clause *ndji ha kwata* 'that does not bear/give birth', both meaning the same thing. This is also a way of harnessing synonyms, but in this case he harnesses a noun and a relative clause.

*Epako: old-homestead*

This place is associated with the cattle which have horns like elephants' tusks. This old-homestead is praised as the mate of the child of Kavikunua. In praises, when a person is said to be a mate or friend of a place it means that that person was born at that place immediately after the people had settled there.

The cattle with which this homestead is praised were short, with spots on or around their tails, they were well built or fat with huge bellies. Since they had huge bellies or stomachs they ate almost everything, including the unripe berries and

wild fruits. The tracks of these cattle were not seen which indicates that they were too many. If one tries to track them, the tracks of the cattle go in different directions and one could not make out which was which. These cattle belonged to Chief Kahimemua, the chief of Ovambanderu, a part of whose patrilineage praise is included here. It is already analysed under the Ekwatjivi matrilineage epithet 9, but this part is not included in the praise of his matrilineage.

### **Epithet 23**

#### **Radio: Otjawana (Botswana)**

According to the oral poet when the radio visited the Epako as explained in the preceding epithet, it intended to go to Botswana. The praise of Botswana is included here and discussed in the relations that follow.

#### *Botswana: hats*

When Samuel Maharero and his followers fled to Botswana they were dressed in uniform, as they fled the fighting. These were hats with wide brims which they used to close on one side with a hook.

#### *Botswana: leopard*

As already explained, the leopard in most praises metonymically means a traditional warrior uniform made of a leopard skin. This uniform is associated with the leopard's behaviour. A leopard is believed to be characteristically ready to attack, especially human beings. When it comes into contact with people it does not run away like other animals do and so this uniform is associated with this typical leopard trait. Its wearer must have a leopard heart and he must not run away when danger approaches. A certain Kazaoro had the leopard-like personality and wore this uniform and he went to Botswana in it. He wore therefore a traditional uniform while others wore modern uniforms.

### *Botswana: umbilical cord*

In praises of places we find many examples where the oral poet uses the phrase *kongwa ya...* 'at umbilical cord of ...'. This typically means that the person whose name is placed in this slot was born at that place. When a child is born, the umbilical cord is cut and buried in the hut in which he/she is born and the Ovaherero believe that the umbilical cord of that person remains there. Places acquire such praises from those who were born there immediately after the people had settled there. If the place did not have a praise before, it becomes its first praise or the first part of its praise. Thus Kame, whose praise is included here, was born in Botswana. He is praised with a certain guinea-fowl coloured ox which had a beautiful black hide similar to those of light black cattle. The small white spots were on a black background which was so beautiful it looked as if it was light black or brownish black. (Otjiherero is very rich in the description of colour patterns of cattle).

### **Epithet 24**

#### **Radio: Omongua (Aminuis)**

The radio also paid a visit to Omongua 'Salt' which is the Otjiherero name for Aminuis. This place was named in this way because of many salt-pans found there.

#### *Omongua: Tjombe*

These salty or brackish pans were seen by Tjombe for the first time. Kambazu wanted to keep the place for himself and tried to hide it from others.

#### *Omongua: sheep*

Uncle Kambahoka was rich in sheep which grazed and scattered everywhere in this place.

*Omongua: camp*

During the reign of Chief Hosea Kuṭako, at Christmas time people gathered there and commemorated their fallen heroes and marched in uniform. These are called the 'military games'. The same thing happens today during August every year in Okahandja.

**Epithet 25**

**Radio: faraway**

The radio is heard faraway at a place praised in this epithet. The name of this place needs further investigation. This place is praised as at the funnels (for pouring milk into gourds) of Kapo and Ndjoura. The oral poet praises it further saying that it is at the yellowish cattle of Mbandi.

*Faraway: cattle*

A place which is closely associated with the cattle of the elder of Karukua is Okondjezu. The elder who is referred to here as the owner of these cattle was Seu, son of Karukua. He belonged to the Otjiseu sub-patrilineage which was named after him. In Kaokoland the main patrilineage is known as Ongweyuva and the Onguramene is another sub-lineage of it. This patrilineage is associated with magical power. Its members are believed to possess superhuman power and they are expected to prophesy and perform rituals that may avert dangers, difficulties or suffering. Because of this wisdom, Seu is praised here that he would have climbed the heaven (sky) but he could not do it because it does not have ladders. The piebald or black and white cattle and hornless cattle are the emblems of this patrilineage. Murangere 'Performer-of-rituals' was a member of this patrilineage and was the direct ancestor of those members of the patrilineage with Murangi as their surname or family name. In order for the cows to bear piebald calves, the owner must have a bull of similar colour. Murangere had such a bull and almost all

of his cattle had the black and white colours.

### **Epithet 26**

#### **Radio: Okakarara**

The radio is still heard in Okakarara, a place about 120 km east of Otjiwarongo. This place is praised in this epithet.

#### *Okakarara: Kahako*

Kahako was one of the residents of Okakarara. He made a big kraal because he had a large number of cattle and had problems with oxen as they used to tear down his kraal. He was a wealthy man and had a lot of subjects and those who are praised here are his own. The colour emblem of Kahako's patrilineage was white, and sometimes any colour with a white strip across the back. The oral poet states that some of the cattle were shining white, likening them to fat from the intestines. When a very fat animal is slaughtered, its intestines are fatty and because of their white colour, it is impossible for a person to stumble over them in darkness as they are easily seen in the dark. Again a similar coloured bull must be kept.

### **Epithet 27**

#### **Radio: Okakarara**

This epithet deals with the same place as epithet 26. Epithet 26 consists of the praise of the place itself, but this epithet deals with the praise of Kangombe, the father of Chief Kambazembi.

#### *Okakarara: Kangombe and Kambazembi*

The Otjozondjupa district, including Okakarara, was ruled by Chief Kambazembi,

son of Kangombe. For this reason this area came to be praised with these well known chiefs.

Chief Kambazembi gained his fame and fortune because he had a considerable wealth of livestock. He was fabulously rich in cattle so that nobody could compete with him. According to the oral poet, he was so tall in richness he was like a palm tree. Nobody could stand alongside the palm tree and touch its top, and thus the oral poet compares his wealth with a tall palm tree whose top could not be reached by anybody.

He also had a sincere love for people as Muuondjo (1992:152) has commented:

“Among other things he was a philanthropist: People who were in need sought his help as a rich man, and his standard donation to those who were less well off is reputed to have been liberal. It consisted of a cow, a number of gourds, and a funnel which enabled the recipient to make use of the donation immediately.”

Muuondjo also refers to his bravery stating:

“My parents told me that Maharero decreed that the bullet that would kill Kambazembi would have to pass through another person before striking him. In other words, he had to be shielded on the field of battle; that was exactly what the Hereros did. He was a proud warrior in whose dictionary the word ‘retreat’ was not defined. In those days the Herero warriors had perfected a tactical manoeuvre which they called a ‘tiger’s retreat’. It was a sudden retreat meant to entice the enemy into an ambush laid by rearguard forces. Kambazembi did not appreciate the benefits to be derived from that tactic. Those of his comrades who sought to resort to it, had to hurriedly return to the core of the battle as they would hear him crying: Hiha of Tjipona! Jezurura the Great of Ngura! Come to the son of Katuse Katjivanda<sup>95</sup> [sic] who is as old as a carrot’s root: come to the shadow of a stone which does not move: the shadow of a tree is pleasant, but it is lacy and moves: come to the son of Katuse Katjivanda who is as old as a carrot’s root. It was considered that his fighting tactics were too bold and unconventional, and exposed the defence forces to unnecessary risks. He was therefore honorably discharged from the army, and given command over the homeguard. For the remainder of his days he did not see the face of battle.” (Muuondjo 1992: 152-153).

Finally, Chief Kambazembi was blessed. “The fame and fortune of Kambazembi

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<sup>95</sup>

The correct spelling should be Katuse kaTjivanda ‘Katuse of Tjivanda’.

came about as a result of Katjimune's blessing of his daughter Kazongaru, who was beloved and who faithfully obeyed his wishes and married Tjirue."

Kambazembi was a son of Kaijahuavi, who was a daughter of Kazongaru, thus Kambazembi was the grandson of Kazongaru, and through her he was blessed by his great grandfather Katjimune. The Ovaherero believe that blessing is recurrent within one's ancestry. The praise of his mother is included here. She is described as walking around with a strap for milking (it is used to tie the cows' legs while being milked). As her husband was rich in cattle, she was always ready to milk cows. She is also described as having been very compassionate. She was well known for her skills in wailing dirges during mourning ceremonies. An example of direct speech accompanies her praise: "May I cry or shout? Bushes burnt simultaneously."

Giving her this direct speech is a way of revealing her compassion or sympathy. It refers to a situation when two persons died at the same time, and she did not know where she could go first. She was, in a way, torn apart.

In the last part of this epithet, the oral poet describes Kambazembi's behaviour at home. According to the oral poet Kambazembi used perfume smoke like a woman. The smoking process is explained under the discussion of the Maharero's praise, epithet 1. Kambazembi also did not warm himself. It is common for Ovaherero to sit around a fire to warm themselves during the cold seasons, a habit Kambazembi did not like.

Furthermore the oral poet describes this district as the chief and favourite area of all Ovaherero districts, because the son of Kambazembi died there while all the people loved him.

The name Kambazembi in this epithet is spelt both as Kambazombi and Mbazombi. The oral poet himself pronounced it like that. This indicates that it linguistically comprises the usual prefix *ka-* which is prefixed to most proper names in Otjiherero, the noun *ombaze* 'foot' and the adjective *ombi* 'ugly'. The name Kambazombi or Kambazembi literally means 'Ugly Foot'.



## **Epithet 28**

### **Radio: tongue**

The oral poet metaphorically refers to the radio as having a tongue as it speaks, sings or makes noises.

#### *Tongue: Otjandiha*

Otjandiha is a place where its voice is also heard. According to the oral poet this is a place where many people grew up. That is why he uses the phrase *omatundu wetu wounene* 'our old-homestead of adulthood'. He further praises that a certain father of Ravindikua was buried there. Kauaja also lived there and is described as having a long neck. When he spoke, he answered himself. The clauses *e rizirire* and *e riitaverere* both means 'he answered himself'. Once again we see here the technique of harnessing synonyms. He spoke and answered himself, while uncle Kakururume and others kept quiet as if they were not men.

## **Epithet 29**

### **Radio: Otjinene**

Otjinene is praised as a beautiful and wide place and, when it was seen by Kaumbangere of Tjombe for the first time, he gave it its name that means a 'huge or wide place'. In this place there were two piebald oxen. One was of Mutunda and it was very old when it died, the other was of the children of the father of Mbanda. The proper name Mbanda 'Cloth' is followed by the explanation of its meaning and it was given to its wearer or carrier by Ndoṇi.

## **Epithet 30**

### **Radio: news**

The radio always has news or something to tell the listeners. According to the oral poet it does not lack news items because it bears news like the scorpion of Kanguati. The reference to the scorpion of Kanguati needs further research.

### **Epithet 31**

#### **Radio: huge**

The radio is huge. When one praises it, one could go on and on, and speak about and around because it is unlikely to praise its wide range of activities in one performance. Thus he compares it to a certain big place of Mbambi of Henda who was Katjiuo who belonged to the Ekwatjivi matrilineage, and who did not expose his genitals. The exposure of genitals must be understood in terms of our traditional aprons where genitals could be easily exposed if one does not take care.

### **Epithet 32**

#### **Radio: comforter**

The radio is heard everywhere. It gives pleasure to children and adults, and to orphans and widows/widowers. All these people who could have been depressed because of the loss of their loved ones, find comfort and friendship in listening to the radio.

### **Epithet 33**

#### **Radio: Otjiwarongo**

The radio had a branch in Otjiwarongo and it is still heard there. The proper name Otjiwarongo was constructed from *otjiwa* 'beautiful' and *otjirongo* 'place'. The name means 'beautiful place'. In Namibia there are three different places that are all named Otjiwarongo. One is in Epukiro reserve, the other in Kaokoland and the

other is the one that is praised here. To make a distinction the name of each is always followed by an explanatory phrase or praise. The one in Epukiro is referred to as Otjiwarongo tjaPukiro 'Otjiwarongo of Epukiro', that in Kaokoland as Otjiwarongo tjoṽakume 'Otjiwarongo of Damara', and the one praised here as Otjiwarongo tjoṽutenda 'Otjiwarongo of railway'. The railway is taken into its praise because it was one of the first places in which the railway was built.

In this Otjiwarongo there lived a man called Kambirongo who had a very fat ox with patches on its jaws. A certain chief of Kaokoland died in Otjiwarongo. Kambirongo slaughtered this ox of his and placed its horns on the grave of this chief and this ox was taken up into this place's praise. Another man Kazombinde was one of the first people to live there and when he moved to other places he left his abandoned huts there. His old homestead reminded people of his days in that place and it was taken up into the praise of this place.

### **Epithet 34**

This is the longest epithet of all epithets in the praises in my corpus.

### **Radio: death**

The radio announced the death of Chief Clemens Kapuuo.

#### *Death: Chief Clemens Kapuuo*

The late Chief Clemens Kapuuo was born in 1923 and was a teacher by profession. He became the closest councillor of Chief Hosea Kuṽako whom he succeeded as a paramount chief of the Ovaherero after his death in 1970. Chief Clemens Kapuuo was assassinated on 27 March 1978 in Windhoek and was succeeded by Chief Kuaima Riruako, the present paramount chief of the Ovaherero.

#### *Kapuuo: physique*

In this relation the oral poet describes the physical traits of Chief Clemens Kapuuo. He had extraordinarily long eyebrows which the oral poet compares with hair of a male wild animal. Normally male animals have long hair and beards on the faces, for example lions or kudu bulls. The gender of the wild animal is described with the phrase *otjoronde tjovikwao* 'climber of others'. *Otjironde* 'climber' in this sense is used to mean that it climbs on females in order to cover them. Chief Clemens Kapuuo was tall and had long arms and so the oral poet describes him as tall, strong and well-built. He was not clumsy and during his reign he went to Jamaica (the Caribbean) for political reasons where women saw him and admired him because of his special physique.

*Kapuuo: ancestors*

In this relation the oral poet relates him to his ancestors and praises him accordingly. He relates him to the children (daughters) of the father of Karunga of the mother of Muvi. One of his ancestors, Muvi, is praised here as having been black like the calves of Katjisemo. Those calves were so black so that in darkness they were only seen when lightning flashed. The children of the father of Karunga were Chief Clemens Kapuuo's mothers. They were beautiful and belonged to the Ekweyuva matrilineage. Their beauty was witnessed by the group of Kautunja. These Ovakweyuva women went to the homestead of Maendo to attend a mourning ceremony of their relative and when they arrived, they were tired and slept behind or outside the homestead. The next morning when they entered the homestead they performed the wailing dirges nicely. They were beautiful, thin and had babies on their backs. The group of Kautunja was about to leave, but when it saw these beautiful women it admired them and decided to stay one more night.

After the oral poet has related him to his matrilineal ancestors, he relates him to his patrilineal ancestors. In praises, when an oral poet relates someone to cattle, it means that he relates him to his patrilineage. Cattle are closely associated with a particular homestead and its sacred shrine. As already explained in the introduction, Ovaherero are patrilocal. Most people in each homestead are

members of the same patrilineage and their cattle are praised accordingly. Thus the praise of the cattle of his ancestors is included in this epithet. Kakundumane was the herder of these cattle and in the example of direct speech he confesses that he did not actually give too much attention to herding them. They had been herding themselves. The reddish coloured cattle are the emblem of this patrilineage. The oral poet describes them as reddish with cups on the mouths. This means that they were reddish with a yellowish strip around their mouths like the bull of Tjitendero.

The oral poet then goes on to relate him to his maternal uncle Tjijapa. The praise of Tjijapa is included here in detail. Tjijapa is another name for Riarua. Riarua is the well known warrior who was Maharero's military chief commander. According to Gewald (1999:43) he "had been Maharero's closest confidant and widely respected supreme military commander of Maharero forces; not surprisingly, therefore, he inherited Maharero's arms". It was a common practice in those days for Ovaherero to attack their enemies during the night, especially in the early hours of the day (approximately between 2 and 5 o'clock in the morning). The clause *"munik' oovitundu kEhangero notutjandja komakondero* 'he looks like anthills at Ehangerero and plains at crossing' means that he was unrecognisable. One would easily confuse him with anthills and plains. With this, the oral poet reinforces the fact that he camouflaged his troops well. Riarua, the chief commander, did this with great success as he knew how to stalk and take their enemies by surprise. For this, he was given the praise that he was a very good guide, who guides when a dog barks, a goat bleats, and fire flashes at their enemies' homestead. In his guiding he rode on the horse of Hizembua with a soft apron. The phrase *kombuku ombanda* 'with apron a cloth' means that the horse had a soft penis, it was castrated. He also guided with the dog of Kozonde. The oral poet also relates Chief Clemens Kapuuo to some of his numerous maternal uncles.

#### *Kapuuo: exemplar*

Chief Clemens Kapuuo was an exemplary person, a model of leadership. The oral poet describes him as fit to be imitated. From him people imitated leadership styles,

imitated his walking style, imitated his respectful habits and tidiness. He was not only outstandingly good in character, but also brave and fearless. Because of the oppression by the South African government, his followers thought that he was a coward. According to the oral poet every person who is praised according to the Ekwendata matrilineage is not a coward. This shows that Chief Clemens Kapuuo was a grandson of Tjiheze, an Omukwendata. A praise of the sub-lineage of this matrilineage to which Chief Clemens Kapuuo's grandfather belonged is included. He was also patient. His political aim was to bring about a peaceful settlement of the independence for Namibia. He repeatedly said *ombinḁu kai yama* 'blood does not rescue'. Probably, his reference is to the German-Ovaherero war of 1904 which almost exterminated the Ovaherero. He was always friendly with children and laughed a lot.

#### *Kapuuo: colonialists*

Chief Clemens Kapuuo was not afraid of officials of the South African government, he faced them directly when he had to. The year when the cattle died was one such occasion when he spoke with them. Among the cattle which died was a certain ox of Tjerije<sup>96</sup> which was a yellowish white in colour. When it was among yellow cattle it was regarded as yellow and when among white it was regarded as white. At Outjo<sup>97</sup>, he spoke with O'Linn, because blacks did not have water in their suburb. After his conversation with the government official, pipelines were laid to the black suburb, and blacks were thankful and felt they were treated a little more like human beings. On another occasion when his people were hungry, he went to the English missionaries who gave him food which he divided among his followers.

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<sup>96</sup> Tjerije was closely related to the Kambazembi royal house. See epithet 27 of this praise.

<sup>97</sup> This town was one of the most racially discriminatory towns in Namibia before independence.

### *Kapuuo: Karuaihe*

During his reign, the late Johannes Karuaihe was one of his closest councillors. He accompanied him in most of his overseas journeys, and together they went to Jamaica as mentioned above. After his assassination in 1978, most people believed that Johannes Karuaihe would succeed him.

Johannes Karuaihe belonged to the Ekwauti matrilineage and is described here as the 'donkey'. In general, the Ovaherero associate donkeys with laziness, but in this context it is used to describe Johannes Karuaihe as an industrious, non-officious and non-tiresome person. When the Ovaherero move from one place to another they pack luggage or burdens on the backs of donkeys and drive the pack donkeys and livestock together to the new homestead. Together with Chief Clemens Kapuuo, Johannes Karuaihe was the one of those who carried the burdens (problems) of the community in their hearts, especially in the seventies. Thus the oral poet metaphorically praises him as the donkey. Most people thought that Chief Clemens Kapuuo and Johannes Karuaihe would go into exile, but they did not.

### *Kapuuo's death: radio*

The radio sent three representatives to report on the proceedings of his funeral. The praises of the three representatives are included. They were the son of Kaijatura of Tjipetekera, son of Tjizoo of Harangata of the daughter of Hei and the son of Seu that of Kanguotui. They reported on the funeral proceedings from 5 o'clock early in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The oral poet concludes this epithet with a part of Chief Clemens Kapuuo's praise.

### **Epithet 35**

### **Radio: Otjiherero**

As discussed under epithet 1.

*Radio: thank you very much*

To conclude, the oral poet thanks the radio for many, very important and remarkably unforgettable activities it has undertaken and still does for the community. He finally repeats a part of the praise of the Ekwendata matrilineage, as he puts it earlier, according to which all metal objects are praised.

Like epithet 1, which is an introductory epithet, this is a short concluding epithet, a feature which does not occur in any of the other praises. In all the other praises, epithets are exchangeable and may occur in any position or in any order, as illustrated in table 2. Within the body of this praise, epithets are exchangeable, but there are some which are consecutively arranged where the following one flows out of the preceding one. However, the first and the last epithet are specifically meant for introduction and conclusion.



## 11. Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the findings as they have emerged from the analysis and discussion of praises in the preceding chapters. It consists of two sections, the grammar of Otjiherero praises and the general conclusion.

### 11.1 The Grammar of Otjiherero Praises

This section gives a picture of the kind of grammatical properties consistently used in Otjiherero praises. The analysis and discussion of praises in chapter 10 has led us to the conclusion that praise sentences have a structure that differs from that of ordinary sentences. Otjiherero grammar is organised in ways (especially the concordance system, absence of overt copulative verb in the present tense and post-head modification) that are immediately exploitable for aesthetic ends in praises. Before we proceed, a brief explanation of those properties of Otjiherero grammar which are exploited by oral poets in praises will be given.

#### *The concordance system*

Otjiherero is agglutinative in nature, as explained in the introduction, and is characterised by noun class prefixes, each of which occurs with a series of concords (or markers or relation signals). These concords signal certain relationships between the noun and other words within a sentence, clause or phrase. Thus every class marker<sup>98</sup> (and simultaneously tense marker), possessive marker, demonstrative, relative marker anaphorically refers to the noun class of the noun related to. See appendix 1 for the complete table of these noun classes and their respective class markers. This rich concordance system is extensively manipulated by oral poets in praises and because of the anaphoric-referential

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<sup>98</sup>

It is called a class marker because it refers to a particular nominal class, but not to a particular noun. All nouns within the same noun class are generically linked with verbs by the same class marker. Similarly possessive markers are directly derived from class markers and characteristically serve the same anaphoric referential purpose.

nature of the Otjiherero concords or class markers the structural complexity in praises is made more easily interpretable, as they are anaphoras of the noun class to which nouns are related.

#### *The absence of the copulative verb*

In some praises, the relationship between the referent and each epithet is not marked by overt grammatical elements. This is because in Otjiherero we do not have an overt grammatical element that expresses the copulative verb 'to be' in the present tense. The difference here is carried by tonal distinctions. For instance, *òmúndú òmùné* 'the big person' and *òmúndú ómùné* 'the person is big'.

#### *Post-head modification*

In Otjiherero syntactic constructions a noun precedes the modifying elements such as adjectives, relative clauses, demonstratives, possessives and others. The oral poets manipulate this principle in praises by recursively subordinating a large number of modifying phrases and clauses to a noun. Thus a complex post-modification is one of the basic characteristics of praises. These three grammatical properties of Otjiherero are manipulated to a greater extent in praises, and shape the peculiar structure of praises.

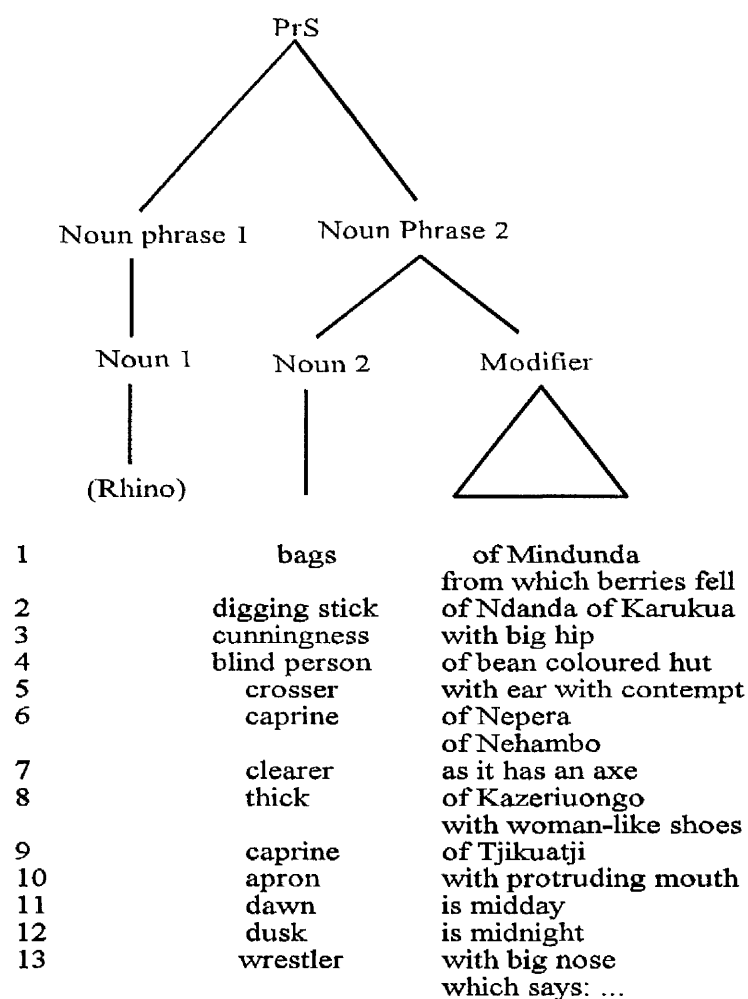
### 11.1.1.

### The Structure

This section examines how words, phrases and clauses are put together, the way constituents are labelled in this thesis and how constituents are related to one another to determine the meaning of a praise sentence.

The structure of praise sentences results from recursive subordinating operations or chains and reflects the absence of the overt copulative verb 'to be' in the present tense as explained above. Diagram 3 below shows how the structure of a praise sentence differs from that of an ordinary sentence.

*Diagram 3: Structure of a Praise Sentence*



Praise sentences are made up of a series of complex noun phrases (e.g. noun phrase 2), as in diagram 3 above. The only noun that fits under the noun phrase 1 is the referent, that, in this case, is the rhinoceros. It is written here and elsewhere in brackets because it is not actually uttered in performance. It is understood by the audience as the referent.

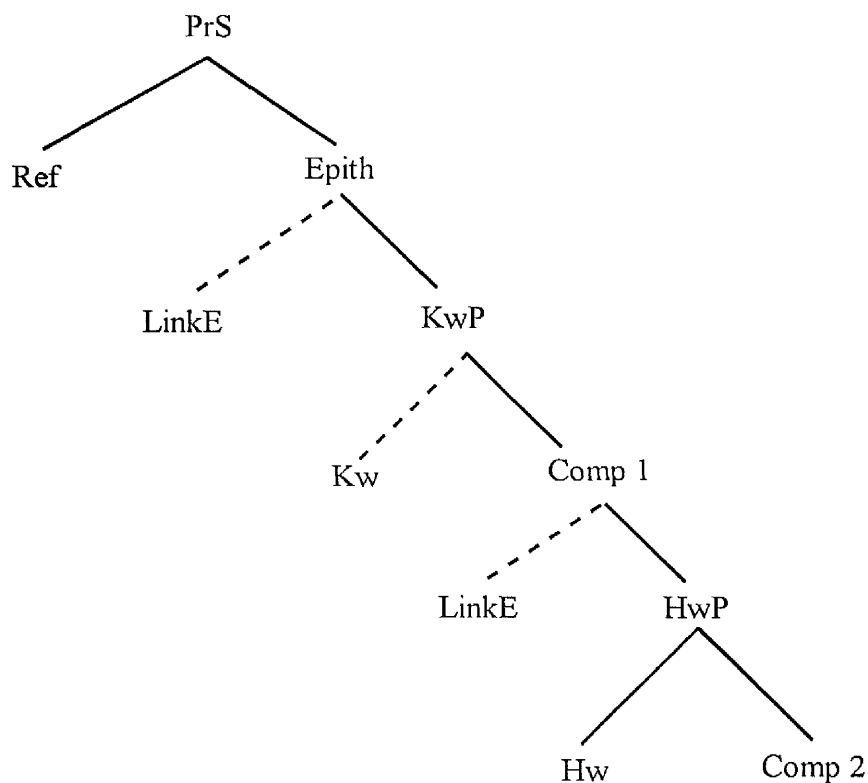
Diagram 3 does not represent the constituent structure of an ordinary sentence in Otjiherero which is normally characterised by noun phrase (NP) and verb phrase (VP). It shows that the structure of most praise sentences consists of two noun phrases without an overt verb, although the copula is realised with tone as shown in section 11.1 above. Thus, diagram 3 shows that the praise of the rhinoceros contains syntactic sequences which resist inclusion in a grammar of general Otjiherero use and it might prove more illuminating to regard it as a sample of a different grammar, a grammar of eulogy. Therefore, in this thesis the typical structure of a praise grammar, will be referred to as the R-E structure which consists of the referent (= noun phrase 1 in diagram 3) and the epithet (= noun phrase 2 in diagram 3) as its major constituents. The R-E structure is a constituent structure which, hopefully, adequately and satisfactorily describes the structure of the praises.

The R-E structure is favoured in this study for two reasons. Firstly, the praise sentences as shown above in diagram 3 do not fit well under the tree diagram of an ordinary sentence. Secondly, this study opted for a structure in which each entity or constituent in the structure may be interpreted in a relation with the preceding and the following entities, as done in chapter 10, because discrete elements of information are linked in a pattern where each entity modifies the preceding one. As Mukařovský (1976:55) rightly observes, “words and sentences appear to follow each other with obvious necessity, as determined only by the nature of the message”. Terminology with relational-functional connotations is

used to label nodes in the R-E structure, because the terminology as used in diagram 3 is functionally neutral. The terms for the R-E structure are defined in chapter 9, section 9.4.1 - 9.4.8. However, we will use some of the terminology of the phrase structure of the ordinary sentence where this is appropriate, especially in drawing of the tree diagrams. (cf. Diagram 3 and 5).

The R-E structure can be represented in the form of a tree diagram. Tree diagrams show the way words are combined together to form a praise sentence. Praise sentences have a basic and flexible structure as shown in diagram 4 below.

*Diagram 4: Basic R- E Structure*



The dotted lines indicate a possibility that such a branching is optional, which makes the structure more flexible. Sometimes a keyword phrase (KwP) may be the only node dominated by the epithet (Epith) when an overt linking element is null as in diagrams 5 and 8. Similarly, in the absence of a keyword, complement 1 is the only node dominated by keyword phrase as shown in diagram 5 and 8. The keyword slot is null, only when a keyword is understood. Again Complement 1 dominates headword phrase (HwP) as its only node when an overt linking element is absent.

Before we parse in detail examples of individual epithets, compare diagram 3 above with diagram 5 below.

*Diagram 5: R-E Structure*

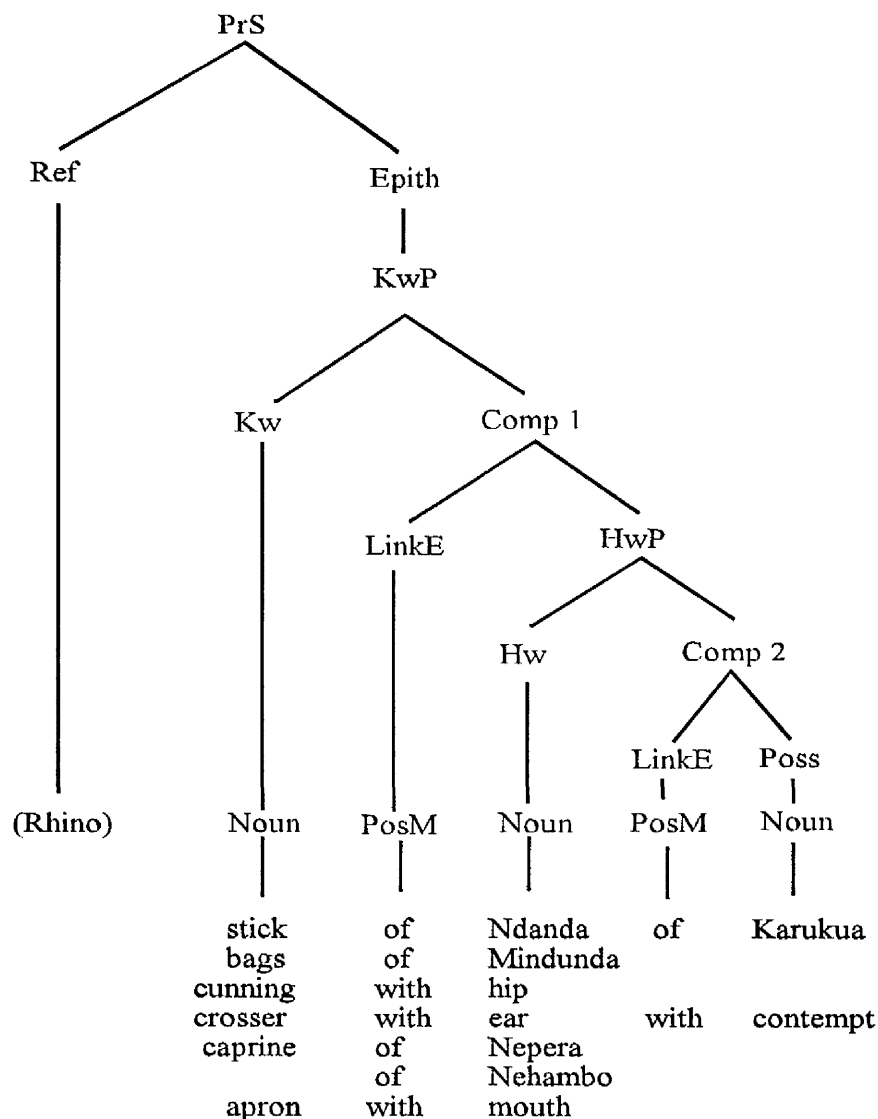


Diagram 5 shows those keywords and headwords that are expanded with possessive phrases, since in the praise of the rhinoceros the complement slots are filled with possessive phrases (expressed as possessive marker + headword phrase or possessive marker + noun). Those keywords or headwords which are expanded with a possessive phrase plus an adjective or noun, relative clause and simile-clause do not appear in this diagram, because their nodes under the complement node would be labelled differently. Note here that the epithet consists of a

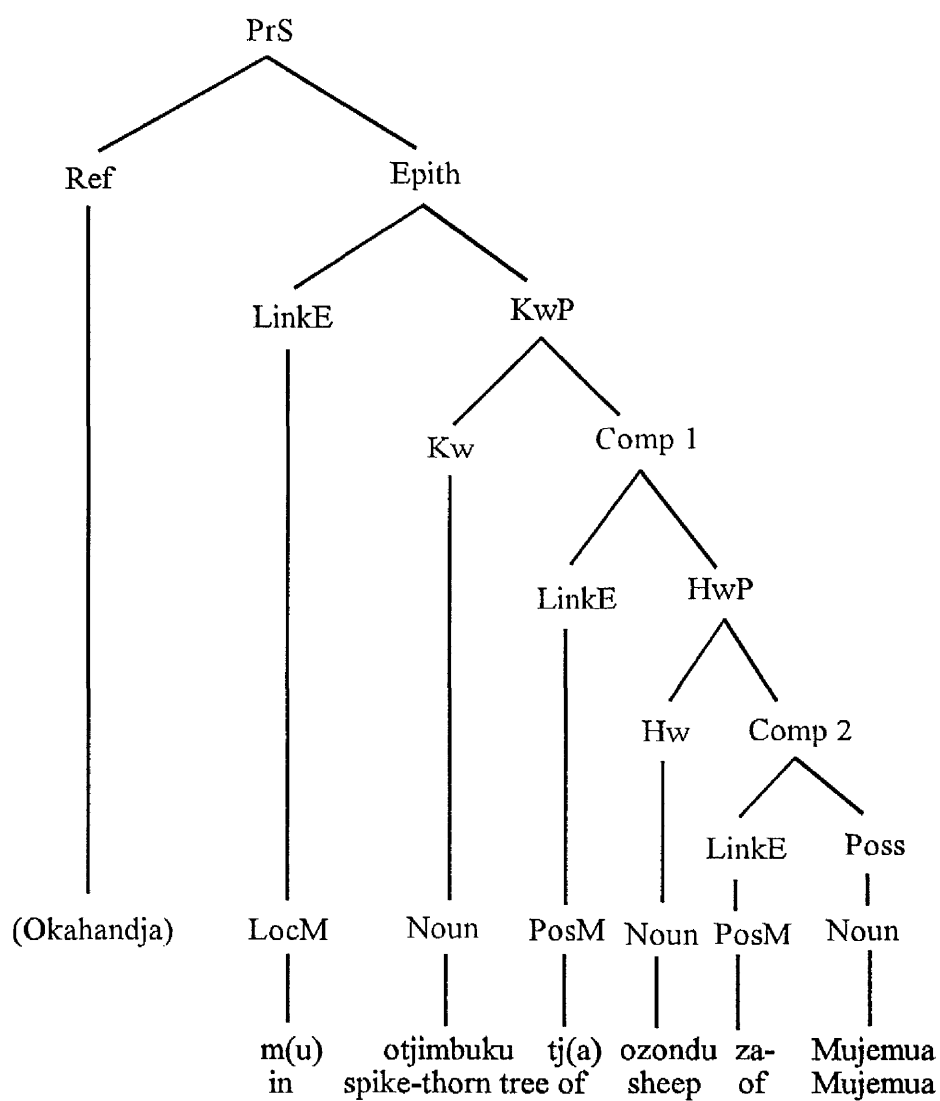
keyword phrase only. Also note that the terminal node, the node at the bottom right side of the tree diagram, is labelled as a possessor (Poss) because it does not dominate any other node. Thus the linking element and the possessor together form a possessive phrase (or possessive complement), as also in diagrams 6, 7, 8 and 9.

A keyword in praises of places and in verb epithets is preceded by a linking element, that is a locative marker or class marker respectively, and the structure of each epithet branches into a linking element and a keyword phrase as its basic constituents. In some epithets the keyword may be preceded by the emphatic morpheme, emphatic phrase or clause or adverb. In the praise of the radio service, the keyword in epithet 1 is preceded by an introductory phrase, a phenomenon which does not occur in all other praises.

Diagram 6 and 7 below illustrate the parsing of praise sentences in which a referent and a keyword are linked with a linking element. The examples parsed are taken from the Okahandja praise (version A, epithet 2) and the radio praise (epithet 5) respectively.

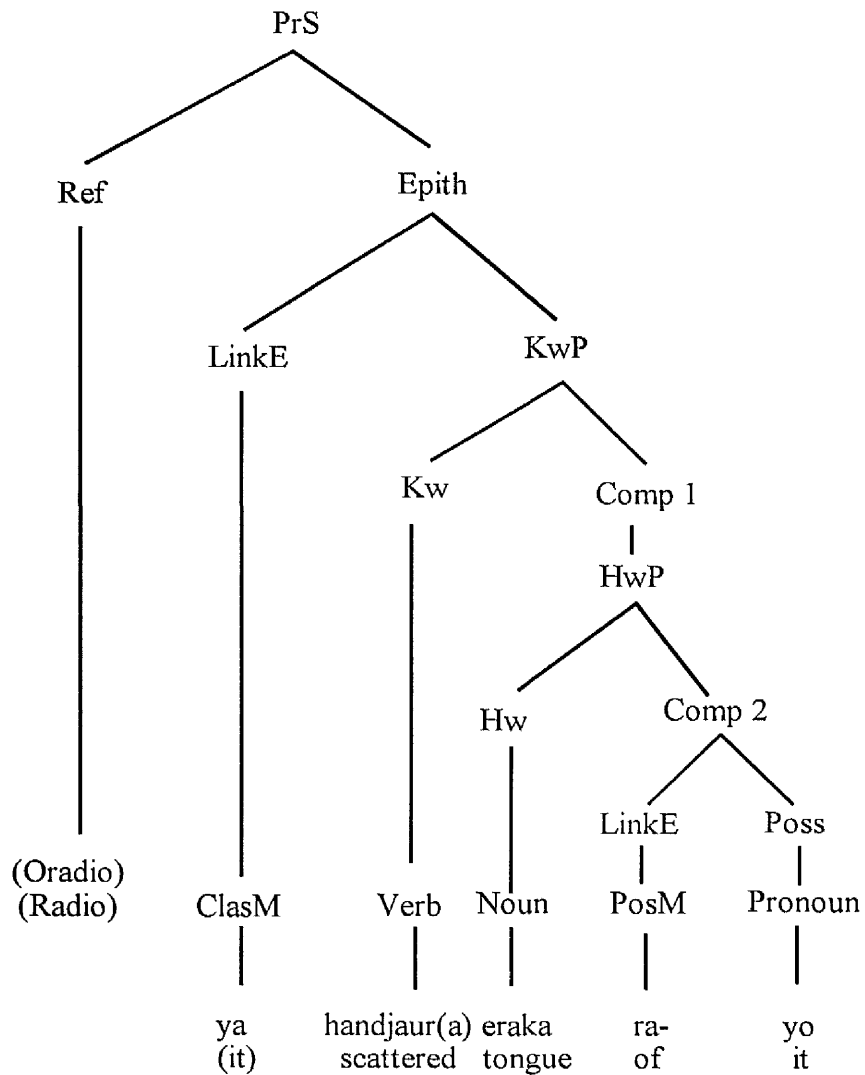


**Diagram 6:** *A Structure of a Praise Sentence of a Place*



An epithet in which a verb is a keyword, has an initially similar structure as in diagram 6 above, but it has different internal branching and its nodes are differently labelled, as shown in the following diagram.

*Diagram 7: A Structure of a Verb Epithet*

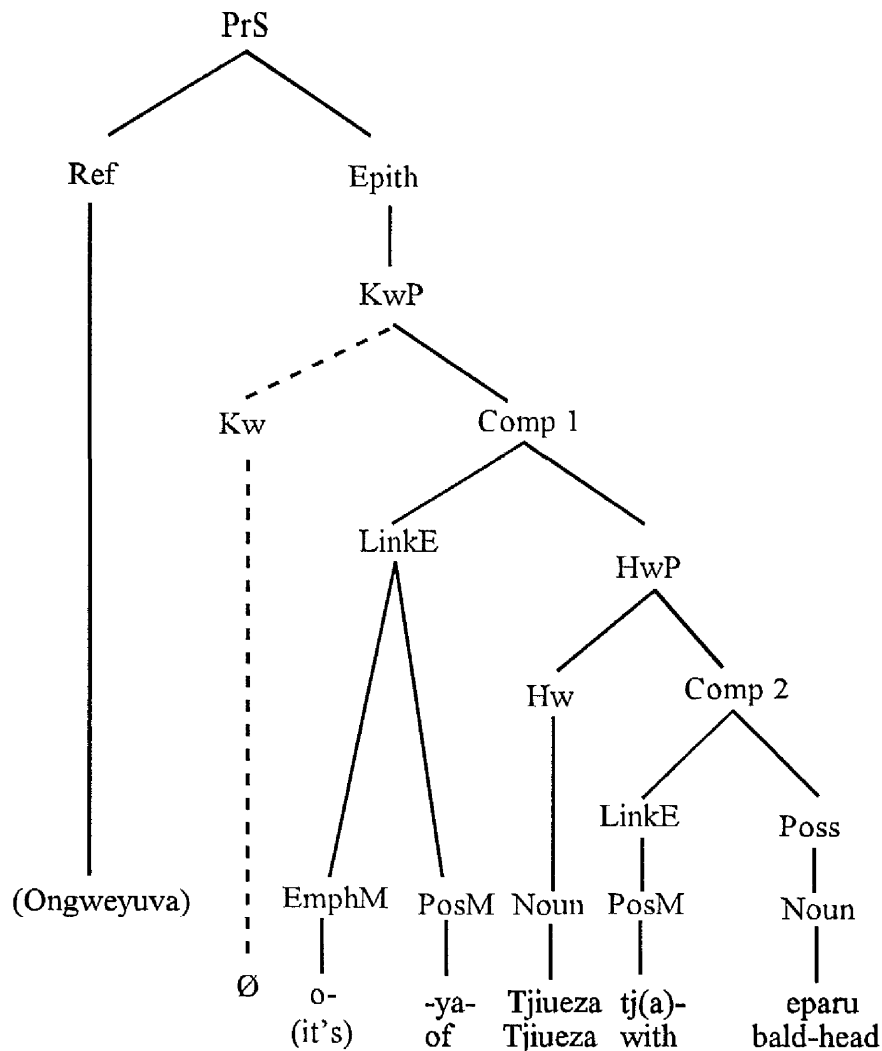


The class marker in a verb epithet may be preceded by a conjunction or an adverb as in epithet 23, 24 and 25 of the radio praise.

A large number of verb epithets occur in the radio praise in which the radio as an inanimate noun metaphorically takes animate verbs, such as *kwata* 'give birth' in epithet 30, *hepura* 'announce' in epithet 34, *ire* 'went' in epithet 27, to name a few.

As shown in diagram 4 above, an epithet may have an empty keyword slot, as parsed in the following diagram. The example is taken from the praise of the Ongweyuva patrilineage, epithet 8. For other examples of empty-keyword epithets see epithets 1, 3, 7 and 9 of the Ongweyuva praise, appendix 5.

**Diagram 8:** *A Structure of an Empty-keyword Epithet*



As diagram 8 shows, the keyword phrase is the only node dominated by the epithet on the one hand while the keyword phrase dominates complement 1 on the

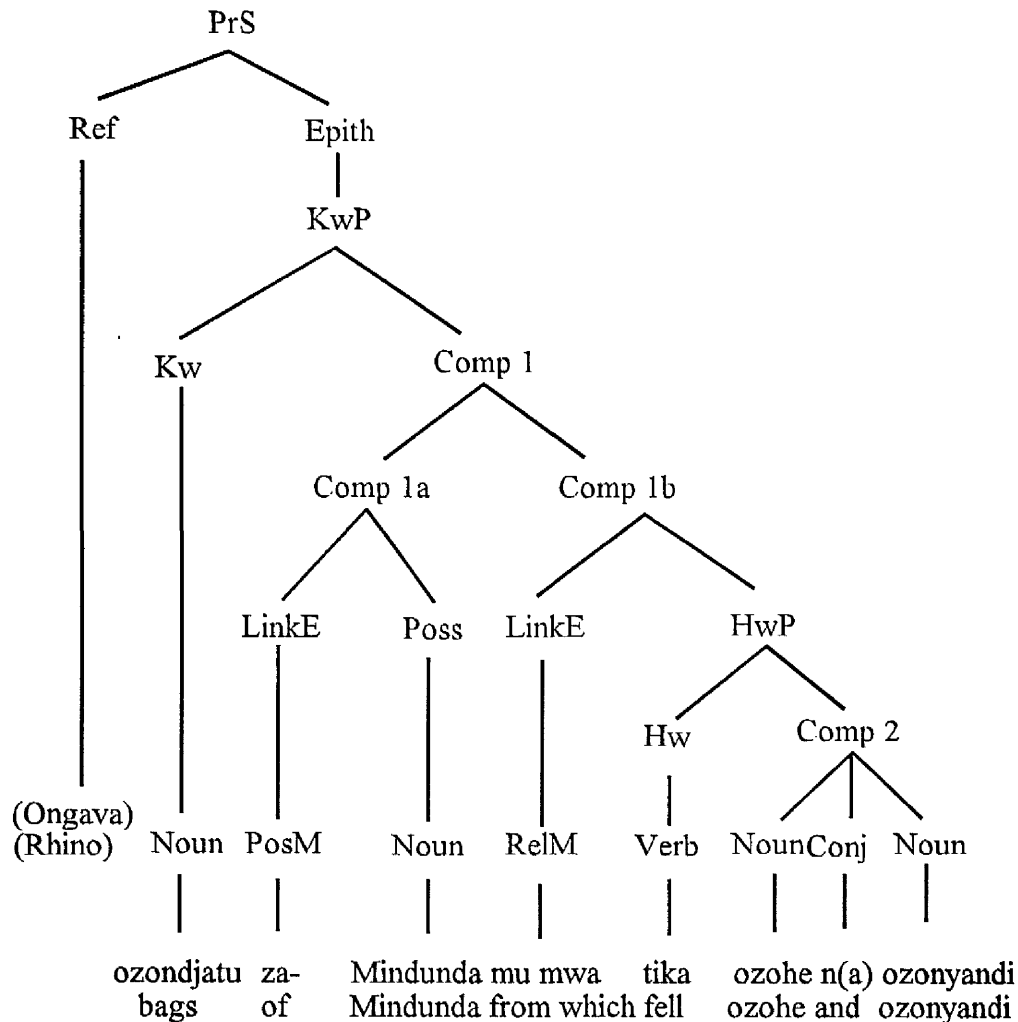
other, as both the linking element and the keyword slot are null.

The emphatic marker *o-* prefixed to the possessive marker *-ya-* ‘of’ may be translated as ‘it is’, and the *ya-* ‘of’ refers to the word *onganda* ‘homestead’ which is the understood keyword. In the absence of the keyword, complement 1 modifies the referent.

Given the recursive subordinating structure of praises, complements occur at different levels of modification depending on the keyword or headword they modify. Complements that modify the same keyword or headword and which are at the same level of modification are numbered complements 1a, 1b, 1c ... or 2a, 2b, 2c etc. respectively, as in diagram 9 below.

The following diagram shows two complements that modify the same keyword, *ozondjaṭu* ‘bags’ in epithet 1 of the rhinoceros praise.

**Diagram 9: Complements at the Same Level of Modification**



The verb headword phrase in the above diagram occurs as an embedded phrase. It is not a major constituent, but part of the subordinate relative clause. Both complements 1a and 1b modify the keyword, *ozondjatu* 'bags'. Note in the above diagram that the nouns under complement 2 are subjects in what would generally be the object position given the general SVO word order in the language.

We conclude then that praises in general have a common consistent, but flexible, structure which is based on the recursive distribution of information and the syntactic functions of structural constituents. The tree diagrams show us how the

overall praise sentence is built up out of constituents, as structural building blocks, of different types. A tree diagram provides a visual representation of the constituent structure of the corresponding praise sentence, each node in the diagram representing a different constituent of the praise sentence.

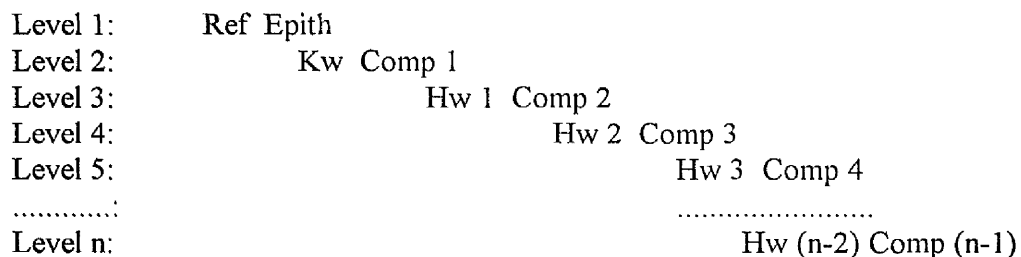
### 11.1.2 Recursive subordination<sup>99</sup>

This is a system of recurrent hierarchic organisation of information, that is to say, a praise consists of hierarchic chains of information. Typically, this is because elements of information in praises are linked in a chain whereby an entity modifies the preceding one. The oral poet, however, breaks the chain at various points to either go back to the referent or keyword and build a further chain or to pick up a headword in the early chain and build from there. The chain which starts at the referent is referred to as an epithet, and that which starts at the keyword or headword as a complement. This is because the oral poet arranges information in accordance with its functional status into key information and complementary information as explained in sections 9.4.4 and 9.4.5. The information in the key slot modifies the referent and in the complement slots modifies either the keyword or headword(s) depending on the level of recursive subordination.

The referent heads each epithet in its whole as an independent descriptive unit, but the referent is directly modified by the keyword. Within each epithet, the keyword heads its complement(s). Within a complement, a headword(s) heads its (their) complements. Further recursion is possible, see for example epithet 34 of the radio's praise.

The levels of recursive patterning may be summarized as follows.

#### *Diagram 10: Recursive Patterning at Different Levels*



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<sup>99</sup> Opland (1996:98) refers to a similar recursive patterns in Xhosa praises as nesting extensions.

This diagram simply shows that the complements are recursively nested inside one another.

The structure of a praise is dominated by the recursive patterning which makes possible the recursion of headword and complements within an epithet. This recursive hierarchy of information is a characteristic feature which typifies the basic structure of praises. Within this recursion the referent and each keyword or headword are modified, defined, exemplified, clarified, explained or extended.

The entities in the complement slots at the same level of modification have equal functions as they modify the same key- or headword (see tree diagram 9). Similarly epithets in a praise have equal functional status as they describe the same referent. Therefore an epithet chosen needs “not encode all information about the intended referent but only the most salient characteristic needed to identify it”, as Levi (1978:242) remarks.

Because of their typical recursive subordinating nature, praises recursively include other praises. For example the praise of Ovakwatjivi includes the praise of Chief Kahimemua which on the other hand embeds the praise of his place of residence and the praise of his place of birth. Thus one may conclude that in Otjiherero praises one entity is praised through another or in terms of another. This characteristic of praises makes recursive subordinating structure useful and highly favoured by oral poets.

It is also relevant to point out here that in praises where more than one complement modifies the same keyword or headword, the expanded complement usually tends to follow the non-expanded one, unless both are expanded. This means that the shorter epithet is closer to the key- or headword that is being modified. See epithet 1, 2 and 6 of the praise of the rhinoceros, epithet 10 of Maharero’s praise as well as epithet 2, 3, 4, 10, 15, 18, and 24 of the radio praise, just to name a few.



### 11.1.3 Slots

Within the internal structure of each epithet, there is one keyword slot and one or more complement slots. These slots within the R-E structure of praises form the basic pattern of praise grammar which is flexibly consistent and operational. Therefore the filling out of slots is a dynamic process by which the descriptive meaning or function of entities unfold in relation to the referent, as the ultimate core of praising.

The filling out of slots serves as a technique through which oral poets amass attributes on the particular referent, keyword or headword. These techniques are used to define, complement, compliment and modify the referent or keyword or other embedded headwords within the epithet. In this way information is patterned accordingly into positions to produce the intended meaning: the key information into the keyword slot and the complementary information into the complement slots.

#### (a) Keyword slot

The keyword slot is completed with repetition, pronominal and nominal substitution, use of the verb as a keyword and what we term the empty-keyword slot technique. These techniques are discussed below.

##### *Repetitive substitution*

The oral poet can fill the keyword slot by repeating the referent in this position, a technique he frequently uses in personal praises in which the proper name of the referent is repeated, for instance in the Tjiponda praise (see appendix 4, epithets 2 to 6 and 8). In limited cases the oral poet repeats the name of a place in this slot too. In such instances the oral poet uses repetition for coherence marking. The second occurrence in the keyword slot harks back to the first, that is the referent, as the topic of praising. Repetition also serves as a linking device. Therefore in this slot we find proper names when the repetitive technique is used.

### *Pronominal substitution*

Sometimes, instead of repeating the name of the referent in the keyword slot, the oral poet replaces it with its pronoun. This pronominal substitution is a means of avoiding repetition. It is often used in personal praises as in the Maharero praise. This substitution of a referent by its pronoun serves cohesion well, the pronoun being a representative of the referent in this slot which refers back to it.

### *Nominal substitution*

Instead of repeating or replacing the referent in the keyword slot, the oral poet may rename, by filling out the keyword slot with words that are in some sense synonymous with the referent. Thus he renames in the sense that he fills out the keyword slot with something different but equivalent or something that could be interpreted as equivalent to the referent. Therefore in this slot we find a large number of synonymous and metaphoric equivalents.

The main purpose of renaming is to describe or modify the referent, the referent and the keyword are expressed as equivalents. Given this occurrence of equivalents, even where there is no particular overt relation signal between them, the relation is coherent. In some instances, we find nominal agreement as a relation signal where the referent and the keyword carry identical noun class prefixes.

### *Verb as a keyword*

In some epithets verbs may serve as the keyword. A class marker is always present to link the referent with the verb (see diagram 7). A large number of verb epithets occur in the radio praise (see, for example, epithets 5 to 7 and 12 to 17).

### *Empty-slot technique*

It is interesting to note here that I found examples of epithets with an empty-keyword slot. In this instance the oral poet starts the epithet with a filling out of the complement slot, by describing the referent with information which is related neither to the preceding nor to the information in the following epithet.

At first sight one might think that the oral poet has forgotten to fill that keyword slot, but after careful consideration it becomes clear that the oral poet has the options of repeating, replacing, renaming the referent in this slot or even leaving it unfilled. Reading the empty-keyword epithet with the referent (or understood keyword) in mind, it makes sense.

In the absence of the keyword the complement modifies the referent directly.

#### **(b) Complement slot**

The complement slot is a modifying expansion slot. To expand or modify the key information the oral poet fills out this slot by elaborating on, extending or enhancing the keyword in focus. Thus complementation potentially implies recursive clarification, exemplification and explanation of a key- or headword. Within this recursive complementation one entity elaborates on the meaning of the preceding one by further specifying, describing or complementing it. It provides a further characterisation of the key information that is already known by restating it, repeating it, clarifying it, refining it, complementing it, by adding a descriptive attribute or comment to it. Thus such description is recursively realised, as shown in diagram 10.

Oral poets fill the complement slot with adjectives, possessives, descriptive phrases and clauses, similes, relative clauses, verb phrases and with any modifying word, phrase or clause that complements the head (keyword or headword). It is typically filled by:

- modifying adverbs of place (linked to the referent, keyword or headword by locative markers), e.g. Okahandja mekwamo, 'Okahandja in the belt'

(Okahandja, epithet 3; for the analysis of a similar example see diagram 6)

- modifying nouns (linked implicitly or through nominal agreement), e.g. Ongava epingo, 'The rhinoceros is the digging stick' (Rhinoceros, epithet 2)
- adjectives (linked through nominal agreement), e.g. Oradio onene, 'The radio is big' (Radio, epithet 31)
- relative clauses (linked by relative markers), e.g. Otjimbumba mba tez' ongombe, 'A group which tracked the cattle' (Maharero, epithet 11; for the analysis of a similar example see diagram 9)
- possessives (linked by possessive markers), e.g. Omuangu womuatje, 'The younger brother of the child' (Maharero, epithet 8; for the analysis of a similar example see diagram 5)
- verb phrases (linked by class markers), e.g. Oradio ya handjaur' eraka rayo, 'The radio scattered its tongue' (Radio, epithet 5, for the analysis of this example see diagram 7)
- similes (linked by comparative markers), e.g. Oradio ya kwat' omahungi otjondje yaKanguati, 'The radio gave birth to the news like the scorpion of Kanguati' (Radio, epithet 30).

When a complement, or part of it, or a headword within it is modified, then a new complement slot is created. The newly created complement slot is filled out in the same way other complement slots are filled out. The complements that modify the same keyword or headword are equivalents since they are headed by the keyword or headword at the same level of modification, as parsed in diagram 9.

Thus words, phrases and clauses that fill these slots are selected and arranged in a manner describing the characteristic features of the particular referent, keyword or headword. The entities in different slots do not function in isolation, but are linked.

#### 11.1.4 Linking

In this section we discuss the interdependence between entities in an epithet, that is the

way an oral poet links entities with one another to produce a meaningful descriptive unit.

Given the concordance system of Otjiherero, linking is largely marked by concordant linking elements or relation signals, which refer back to the noun class of the embedding entity. One may argue that it agrees with the preceding entity within the relationship, because the relation signal occurs between the entities in the relationship. The particular relationship between entities is signalled by these linking elements, which may be regarded as the threads that keep the structure together to form a unified whole.

In this study we distinguish explicit and appositional linking. Explicit linking exists between entities when a linking element functions as a connective, while in appositional linking, entities are linked in a kind of relationship characterised by the absence of an overt linking element that expresses the relationship. The relation between entities is inferred or assumed through the context, though the juxtaposition of words suggests a direction in which inferences might be made.

In praises of places the keyword slot is always preceded by a locative marker: either a proximal locative marker *mu* 'in' or a distal locative marker *ku* 'at', and, to a lesser extent, the referential locative marker *pu* 'on'. The referential locative marker is used when a specific spot is referred to as the spatial setting of a particular event. As already mentioned above in section 11.1.3, repetitions and pronouns in the keyword slot also serve as linking devices. For examples of other linking elements, see section 11.1.3 above.

#### **11.1.5 The relative Value of Entities**

One of the purposes of praising a referent is describing it in a poetic way, the closeness of the descriptive information to the referent is reflected in its position in the structure. Within the recursive subordination the referent is directly described by the keyword.

As already discussed under section 11.1.3, the keyword information may be expressed through repeating the referent by a pronoun, by a noun, verb or adjective. Repetition and the pronoun in this slot function as linking elements with very limited descriptive value. When a noun or adjective occurs in this slot, its descriptive value is relatively high. Thus a word or entity has a high descriptive value in relation to its descriptive status and position in the structure. Similarly compounds have higher descriptive value than single words, especially those formed from clauses because of their dense contents. This leads the oral poet to prefer such compound words to single words.

When an epithet is recursively expanded, the more the recursion unfolds, the less the descriptive value of the entities at the far end of expansion relate to the referent in focus. At that far end the complement describes the headword that embeds it with either no or little contribution to the description of the referent. This is a kind of 'deviation' from the central focus of description in the praise performance. In praising, the oral poet is not expected to present a well ordered series of pieces of information, but relevant and less relevant pieces of information. The inclusion of relevant and less relevant information in relation to the referent in focus is one of the common characteristics of praises.

#### **11.1.6 Compounding**

Praises consist of a high proportion of compounds (a combination of more than one word) and complex nouns (a combination of one word with additional affixes and particles) that are of a descriptive nature. An oral poet condenses what appear to be larger linguistic units into a compound or into a brief phrase to produce a more focussed description of the referent. Through this an oral poet succeeds in expressing his ideas and intentions in meaningfully modified utterances. This is an encapsulating technique that is often used by oral poets because of the dense content of the newly coined compounds. Compounds have more descriptive value than single words, and they fit the descriptive purpose of praises well. Thus the oral poet uses compounds in order to say much in a vivid way but with economy.

Although compound and complex nouns exist in Otjiherero everyday speech, the oral poets manipulate this technique to invent new compound and complex words and to enhance the descriptive style of praising. Such descriptive compounds are valuable, economic and flexible and their meaning can be inferred from their morphemes. Most compounds are characteristically metaphoric, descriptive compounds which relate to the referent, keyword or headword they modify.

The words *ongondamivanda* 'passage-crosser', *ongokoravitamba* 'plot-clearer' and *ombikamiti* 'tree-wrestler' are compounds in the praise of the rhinoceros that may be considered to have been created through a compounding process in which sentences are reduced to compounds. Compounding may be called a conversion technique through which a sentence may be reduced to a compound with some syntactic constituents being deleted in the process. This process takes place in accordance with the following steps<sup>100</sup>.

*Step 1:* Subject deletion. The subject of a sentence is partially deleted. Its nominal radical is deleted but its nominal class prefix remains.

*Step 2:* Class marker deletion: The class marker is deleted.

*Step 3:* Initial vowel deletion: The initial vowel of the object is deleted.

*Step 4:* Consonant assimilation<sup>101</sup>: Under the influence of the noun class prefix o(N)-

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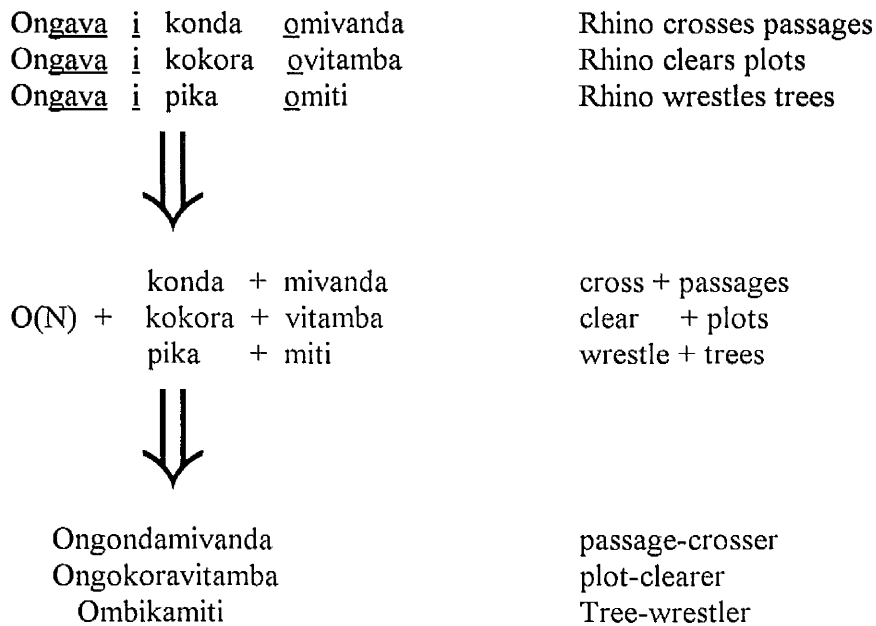
<sup>100</sup> These steps are just to explain the way in which the compounding process takes place, but do not necessarily define the process itself.

<sup>101</sup> This process involves voicing, because when the class prefix o(N)- is followed by a voiceless stop, then that voiceless stop changes into its voiced counterpart, for instance: [k] becomes [g], [t] becomes [d], [tʰ] becomes [dʰ], [p] becomes [b]. When this noun class prefix is followed by a voiced labial fricative, the labial sound changes into [b] and the [N] of the noun class prefix changes to [m]. The semivowel [w] and the vowel [u] effect changes in the same way the voiced labial sounds do, but they themselves remains unchanged, i.e. [mbw] for [w] and [mbu] for [u]. This process also involves plosivation, since with the exception of [p], the other labial sounds are voiced fricatives which change into plosives. This means a non-plosive sound changes into a plosive sound or a plosive sound is produced. Similarly the vowel [i] and semi-vowel [j] change to an affricate [tʃ] where the [i] remains unchanged. Only high vowels effect these changes.

the following [k] and [p] change into [g] and [b] respectively.

The compounding process is illustrated in the diagram below. All the underlined parts will be elided during conversion.

**Diagram 11: Conversion of Clauses into Compounds**



Another example of compounding in which a complex noun was formed is taken from the praise of Okahandja, the keyword of epithet 5, *ohapatwa* 'non-buttoned', another is from the radio praise (epithet 20) *ohakondwa* 'non-crossed'. This conversion involves only two steps. First the nominal radicals (\*-*banda* or -*vanda* of *ombanda* 'cloth' and \**dondu* of *ondondwa* 'river') are elided and the noun class prefix o(N)- remains. Secondly the active negative class marker (*kai*) is changed to its less-active partner *ha*. The *ha*-form of the negative marker is used in word-formation processes in general while the *ka*-form is only used in negative sentences.

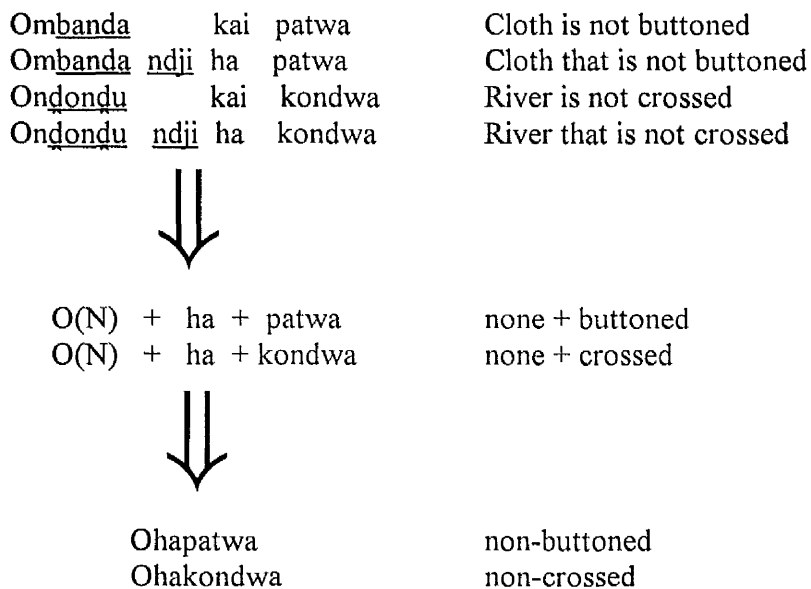
The result is: o(N) + *ha* + *patwa/kondwa* > *ohapatwa/ohakondwa*.

The compounding process goes hand in hand with a phonological process in which the [n] of the class prefix o(N)- is deleted. This is done when the noun class prefix is followed by the voiceless fricatives [θ] and [h]; and the nasals [m], [n], [ŋ] and [ɲ].



If, on the other hand, one were to argue that such complex nouns are derived from relative clauses, only the elisions of the nominal radicals and the relative markers apply. The result of this process is identical to that given above. This type of word formation is illustrated in the following diagram.

**Diagram 12: Conversion of Clauses into Complex Nouns**



Other examples of compounding such as *ondindisengo* 'thick-neck', *oseranyama* 'red-meat' and *ezuvanyo* 'wet-mouth' are frequently found in praises. As explained in section 11.1, in Otjiherero the noun precedes the adjective that modifies it (post-head modification), but when a noun and its adjective are combined to form a compound the adjective precedes the noun. For instance in examples *o+ndindi* 'thick' + *sengo* 'neck', and *o+sera* 'red' + *nyama* 'meat'. In a normal usage they are realised as *osengo ondindi* 'neck thick' and *onyama osera(ndu)* 'meat red' respectively.

The compounding process is a productive means of packaging information into compounds where two or more syntactic properties are combined to form a new single unit which combines the meanings of the constituents involved.

The compounds and complex nouns that behave as modifiers have more economical

and dense descriptive significance than single non-compound words. For this reason the oral poets create new compounds for greater descriptive impact and, because of their condensed content of information, for the sake of verbal economy. This means that the oral poets draw their inspiration from the ordinary nature of compounding to create their own dense and concise or compact coinages. Compounding is a literary manipulation of syntactic/morphological processes of the language by oral poets.

#### 11.1.7      **Emphasis**

Emphasis in praises is expressed in the following ways:

- Emphatic prefixes *o-* and *oo-* that are often added or prefixed to the locative markers in the praises of places. See appendix 3 version C, all epithets.
- The clause *ongu ri ye* 'it's him' or *ondji ri yo* 'it's it' and adjective *omuini* 'himself' in the Maharero and radio praises express emphasis very well. They are explained below.
- Repetitions, such as in the praise of Tjiponda, are used for emphatic reinforcement. See appendix 4, epithets 2 to 6 and 8.
- Direct speech in praises is also a good example of the realisation of emphasis. Where the oral poet wants to put emphasis, he changes from the indirect mode of praising to direct speech, especially in animal praises.

Manipulation of voice also serves as a type of dramatisation and concretization of abstract ideas such as thoughts and imaginings. In direct speech, an oral poet enacts the role of the person or object given voice in this way and the expression or utterance becomes alive and vivid and heightens the description of the referent or entity in focus. The examples of direct speech in praises serve as important contributors to emphasis.

Examples of direct speech in animal praises are actually personified examples that represent the direct thoughts of oral poets. An oral poet looks at that particular animal from the animal's perspective and imagines how it may 'think' of itself in such a

situation and puts the words into its mouth. Direct speech in this case reflects an oral poet's imagining of that animal in a particular situation. This is a type of indirect interpretation of the referent, especially of a difficult situation in which it might find itself. Consider the following examples.

Zebra: "My foal. Eat carefully. Here are those who eat and those who have finished us."

Ongoro: "Ngorona yandje. Rya nawa. Moṇa mu noombe tu rya noombe tu mana." (Ohly 1990:58)

Rhinoceros: "I am killed by a brave wide-awake [hunter]. I am not killed by a brave dare-devil."

Ongava: "Mbi ʔu mbande yongengeza. Hi ʔu mbande yeyova." (Rhinoceros, epithet 13)

Giraffe: "Kill me, but I'll give you anxiety."

Ombahe: "Ndji zepa ri nu me ku pe otjikendo." (Ohly 1990: 56)

A character in the radio's praise: "May I cry or shout."

Omukazendu momuṭandu woradio: "Hi rire poo hi ure." (Radio, epithet 27)

Most examples of direct speech in praises have emotional overtones. These examples denote the emotions brought about by death. The use of direct speech and dialogue strengthens focus and emphasis on a particular point and may be conceived of as a useful literary device, that also carries an emotional connotation that enlivens the poetic description.

The manipulation of voice also reflects the oral poet's emotional involvement. Similar to the oral poet of Basotho praises (Kunene 1971:35), in Otjiherero the oral poet is "not a chronologist, [he] reflects his emotional involvement in, and reaction to, the events he is talking about, in figurative language he uses".

The use of direct speech allows free play to the voice of the referent, heard directly. It may be classified as a dramatic monologue because it is uttered without the expectation of response, but with the purpose of being overheard. The use of direct speech is described by Holman (1986:158) "the character is speaking to an identifiable but silent listener at a dramatic moment in the speaker's life".

As we may infer from the analysis of praises, emphasis is used mostly at the beginning and at the end of a praise. The emphatic expression *ongu ri ye* 'it's him' in the Maharero praise appears in epithet 3, epithet 9, and in the last three epithets as well. Similarly emphatic *ondji ri yo* 'it's it' in the praise of the radio occurs in the second and last epithets. The emphatic o- which may be translated as 'it is' is generally prefixed to the locative marker of the first epithet of praises of places. In version C of the praise of Okahandja, Mr Kaputu prefixes it to the locative marker of each epithet because during the interview he chanted each epithet as an individual praise of Okahandja. The reason for doing this is explained in section 9.4.3. In the Maharero praise this emphatic expression is evenly distributed. It occurs at the beginning, middle and at the end.

The clauses *ongu ri ye* 'it's him' and *ondji ri yo* 'it's it' carry little factual information. Their most important function is to express emphasis. This enhances or elevates Maharero to higher esteem and emphasizes the important activities of the radio service. The oral poet chants this clause with Maharero's heroic deeds and the activities of the radio service in mind, hinting at them rather than simply listing them.

The emphatic expression *omuini* 'himself' is not used for emphasis only, but it serves as an attention focussing device that forces the listener(s) to think about the unexpressed information. Why is the oral poet emphasising this or that? It is obvious that the listeners are not just passive listeners to praises, but are led in a way to think about what the oral poet says. The emphatic expressions are structured in such a way as to be powerful to the listeners.

The term *omuini* 'himself' occurs six times in the Maharero praise and serves largely as an emphatic marker rather than a descriptive complement. The question may come to one's mind also why *omuini* serves as an emphasis-loaded term. To answer this question one may look back to Maharero's history as sketched above. He was in Jonker Afrikaner's 'prison'. He became a military leader and chief who fought many wars of freedom against the Afrikaners, and who became paramount chief of the Ovaherero eventually throwing off the Afrikaners' yoke from his people's shoulders. The occurrence of *omuini* in the last three epithets reinforces these successes of his in these wars of freedom. When one reads these lines slowly, with history in mind, one feels that power of success. He is glorified as having had superhuman (or supernatural) power. After the war for freedom, Maharero gave himself a prestigious name 'Maharero the Great, the Rich, and All-powerful'<sup>102</sup>. Vedder (1938:140) describes Maharero as "the most powerful of all the Herero chiefs and their liberator from the hands of the Namas". According to Njanekua (1992:136) Maharero was also called Muniovita 'Owner-of-war', especially by the men of his age who fought with him. In this light the emphasis on *omuini* 'himself' fits well his elevated status. Such emphasis implies an enthusiastic recognition or elevation of his superiority and adds an implication of ecstatic attention.

#### 11.1.8 Imagery

"Clarity of language ... results when clarity of thought is adequately translated into words."

(Milic 1970:254)

By imagery here is meant a figurative expression in which a word, phrase or clause is transferred from its normal uses to a context in which it evokes new meaning(s).

It is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that during the act of praising the oral poet holds a subliminal picture or image of the referent and ideas around it in his mind.

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<sup>102</sup> See Vedder 1938:386.

Seeing the picture of a human or animal shape “gives the mind something to go on in fabricating analogies”, as Ferguson (1959:56) remarks. This picture or image appeals to the imagination of an oral poet as he searches for alternatives in spoken words. What he utters, thus, are fragments or parts of that picture.

Through images an oral poet, as Ferguson (1959:43) generally puts it, “develops a sturdy habit of drawing with words and of seeing the often helpful and sometimes mysterious relation of one thing to another”. Words are carried beyond the meaning normally assigned to them, and sometimes the quality of the oral poet’s imagination is surprising.

Wallace Martin in Preminger and Brogan (1993: 761) lists the general functions of metaphor (or imagery) as follows.

- aesthetic: making expression more vivid and interesting;
- pragmatic: conveying meaning concisely; and
- cognitive: providing words to describe things that have no literal name, or rendering complex abstractions easy to understand through concrete analogies.

These functions also hold true for imagery or metaphor in Otjiherero praises. Think in terms of this example:

The radio gave birth to the news  
Oradio ya kwata omahungi

Through imagery, the oral poet describes the referent by analogies. Through these images the oral poet tries to portray the referent in a poetic way. Understanding and dismantling through resemblances, these analogies contribute greatly to the understanding of the meaning of the praise as a whole.

The oral poet uses images to refer to the aspects of his experience in another light in relation to the referent. In the praise of the rhinoceros, each keyword is used as a

controlling image around which the enriching images in a specific epithet are organised. He uses metaphoric (e.g. digging stick for horn), metonymic (e.g. cunningness for the rhinoceros), synecdochic (e.g. digging stick = horn = rhinoceros) and personified (e.g. blind person for rhinoceros) images to describe the rhinoceros from different perspectives and in different ways.

In the praise of Okahandja the keywords are also metonymically, synecdochically or metaphorically used, in the sense that the place, or the name Okahandja, is substituted with the names of objects and/or phenomena historically or semantically associated with it such as hillock, belt, non-buttoned gown, kudu, common spike-thorn tree and bean coloured cow. These historically significant spots and objects in Okahandja are 'enlarged' to stand for Okahandja as a whole. The hillock and common spike-thorn tree may also be viewed as small spots or areas in Okahandja that are used in a part-to-whole relationship in their historic associations with Okahandja. From this one may infer that there is always a historic and/or semantic relationship between the substituted word (representing an object or phenomenon of semantic or historic significance) and the referent. The oral poet exploits these metaphoric associations to a large extent in praises.

The praise of the radio is based on personified metaphors. It is given animate traits such as male dog, bull, greedy person just to name a few. Through these analogies the oral poet attempts to create a concrete picture of the radio with which he adds vividness to his imaginings.

Through imagery the oral poet substitutes the unknown or little known for the known concepts. The concepts used in praises are known to most people in our community, because every member is in constant contact with these concepts in his daily activities. Those who do not know or know little about the referent in focus (such as the rhinoceros or radio) would visualise and unify these concepts to form a representative picture of the particular referent, as in the following diagram.

**Diagram 13: Known Words for Unknown or Little Known Words**

Unknown	Known
rhinoceros' belly/bowels	bags
rhinoceros' horn	digging stick
rhinoceros' poor eyesight	blind person
rhinoceros	caprine (domestic animal)
rhinoceros' feet	shoes
colour of a rhinoceros	apron
radio's search for news	greedy person
voice from the radio	tongue

### 11.1.9 Derogatory Description

The possessive derogatory marker *ok-* occurs frequently in many praises. This marker precedes an augmentative, derogatory or diminutive description. The noun that always follows this possessive marker carries one of the following noun class prefixes: *otji-/ovi-*, *e-/oma-* and *oka-/ou-*. The *oka-/ou-* class prefixes denote a diminution or diminishing satire to lessen the reputation of the referent or any entity in focus. When this possessive marker is used with the noun class prefix *otji-* or *ovi-*, then together they convey an augmentative meaning. With *e-* or *oma-*, it denotes a derogatory meaning. These meanings are illustrated in following diagram:

**Diagram 14: Derogatory Description**

$$Ok- + \begin{bmatrix} E-/oma- \\ Otji-/ovi- \\ Oka-/ou- \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} Derogatory: ugly \\ Augmentative: large \\ Diminutive: small \end{bmatrix}$$



The following examples<sup>103</sup> substantiate the above discussion.

Okotjivango 'big hip' ok + otji + vango (**evango**) (rhinoceros, epithet 3)

Okotjikutwi 'big ear' ok + otji + ku + twi (**okutwi**) (Rhinoceros, epithet 5)

Okeumbanyo 'big and ugly mouth' ok + e + umba + nyo (**otjinyo**)

(Rhinoceros, epithet 10)

Okoviuru 'big nose' ok + ovi + uru (**omauru**) (Rhinoceros, epithet 13)

Okoupaze 'small feet' ok + ou + paze (**ozombaze**) (Ohly 1990:62, bee)

When a noun occurs in the *otji-/ovi-* class as its normal noun class, then it is augmented and derogated with the *e-/oma-* class prefix, depending on the context. In the same way the noun in class *e-/oma-* is augmented and derogated with the *otji-/ovi-* class prefix. Those words which normally belong to the *oka-/ou-* classes cannot be diminished or belittled. Sometimes the *oka-/ou-* classes imply affection. These descriptions are actually manipulations of the Otjiherero noun class system for wit or humorous expression through semantic overlay.

All these descriptions have a derogatory or sarcastic flavour, because the descriptions refer to abnormality or are made for the effect of sarcasm. The oral poet satirically uses derogatory descriptions to add a bit of humour or witty pleasure under the guise of praise. Sometimes he does not really mean that the big, ugly and weak or small characteristics are possessed by the particular referent. Because of the huge body size of the rhinoceros its parts are also enlarged by the oral poet, and the feet of the bee have to fit its tiny body size. Normally, in relation to their body sizes the parts are normal. In ordinary speech these parts are used with their normal prefixes. These descriptions often occur in praises and in insulting exchanges.

#### 11.1.10 Humour and/or Witty Pleasure

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<sup>103</sup>

The morphemes in bold are the normal noun class prefixes.

This section supplements the imagery (11.1.8), the derogatory description (11.1.9) and parallelism and equivalence (11.1.13).

Praises reflect the power of observation, thought, humour (or wit) and wisdom of the oral poet or, more precisely, of the community which helped create them.

The oral poet carefully observes the referent, picks out the striking features or what he views to be of great importance, and presents them in a poetic descriptive way to expose the referent's appearance and character. This ability enables the oral poet to perceive and imagine the referent's thoughts and feelings and express them in its praise. He does not describe the referent at random, but thinks and chooses what he deems interesting and important for inclusion. The juxtaposed arrangement of entities is chosen not for customary meanings but for the effect produced by their interaction within that particular relationship, in the framework of the ideas they are intended to convey or the significance they bear. He always digests the raw materials of praises for inclusion or exclusion. This reflects the idea that every context of performance is a unique situation.

The way in which the oral poet interestingly juxtaposes dissimilar and unrelated entities (as discussed under imagery) to produce the required impact is humorous. He relates features that are not clearly similar in dissimilar entities so that one entity's nature may be understood in its relation to an other's. The relationships are patterned with great wit<sup>104</sup> in such a way that may arouse interest and may be accompanied by amusement, admiration and laughter. His unexpected combining and contrasting of ideas in praises reflect his power of giving pleasure by wisdom and wit.

The analogies, the figurative use of the language and the juxtaposition of dissimilar

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<sup>104</sup> Wit here implies the intellectual brilliance and quickness in perception combined with talent for expressing one's ideas in a sparkling and effective manner, especially in unexpectedness and aptness of application of expressions and utterances.

entities are the source of humour which moves the emotions and awakens pleasure in the audience.

#### 11.1.11 Periphrastic description

This is a roundabout method of describing an entity in question, used in praises with deliberate intent, in which many words are used where one word would have served.

In praises we distinguish four types of periphrastic description, viz. substitution of a proper name with a praise, substitution of a proper name by the phrase 'father/mother of ...', substitution of a proper name by a nickname and the use of a proper name as a proper name itself as well as a common noun. These types are discussed in turn below.

##### *Substitution of a proper name with a praise*

In some cases the name of the place or person whose praise is included is not mentioned. The oral poet does this because he believes that the name of such a place or person is conventionally shared and the listener(s) would be able to deduce (or infer) it from its or his praise. The listeners rely on their intuition and conventions communally shared by members of the same community, the oral poet included. One will know the name of that particular place or person when the praise is adequately inferred. When the listener or interpreter lacks such facts or knowledge, or when his knowledge of praises is limited, he is at a loss. Such a phenomenon makes the understanding and interpretation of praises more difficult. In very limited instances the name of the place or person is mentioned and immediately followed by its praise.

An oral poet may use the praise of the specific entity instead of its proper name, for instance *wa kwaterwa k...* 'he was born at ...'. One expects the name of the place of his birth in this slot, but in that slot oral poets insert the praise of the particular place. In this slot we find phrases such as 'ox of Muzeu' or 'dog of Kauzuuo'. How should one be born at an ox or dog? In English such phrases sound odd, but an Omuhherero

expects this slot to be filled out by either the proper name or the praise of the place where the person in question was born. In praises it is likely to be filled out by praises themselves. I call such description the periphrastic description because of its circumlocutory nature.

*Substitution of a proper name by the phrase 'father/mother of ...'*

The substitution of one's proper name by the phrase 'father/mother of ...' is another type of periphrastic description. The main purpose of this circumlocution is respect, honour, politeness and a wish to avoid giving offence.

Among Ovaherero there is a tendency to call men and women by the names of their children, specifically their first born, out of respect and honour for them. The phrases *hi ya* ... 'father of ...' and *ina ya*... 'mother of ...' are well established within our community. Only persons of the same age may call one another by their proper names and younger people are not allowed to call adults by their proper name, they must call them 'father/mother of ...' or just father or mother. Sometimes this phrase, plus the name of a child, almost replaces the name of that particular person, for instance Father-of-Kungairi for Kahimemua, as discussed in the Ovakwatjivi praise, epithet 9 (in chapter 10, section 10.4).

Some people are given names such as Hijakarukura 'Father-of-not-vomiting' and Inaahange 'Mother-of-peace'. These names do not mean that they are respectively father and mother of 'not-vomiting' and 'peace', because these names were given to them while they were babies. The use of these names in oral genres, like praises, is confusing when the listener does not know whether the speaker refers to the person for respect (through his/her child) or whether the person is named in that way.

In addition, the phrase 'wife of ...' is frequently used in praises, followed by the praise of the place of birth of the particular woman's husband. This phrase together with the praise is a kind of praise name by which each married woman is identified, referred to

and called upon during wailing ceremonies, as explained in section 4.4.2.

#### *Substitution of a proper name by a nickname*

In contrast to the respectful substitution of one's proper name by 'father/mother of ...', a nickname or another name is used to substitute one's proper name for humorous or satirical purposes. To a large extent a nickname is given to a particular person by the members of his age set. Only the members of that age set are allowed to call their age set mates by their nicknames which are jokingly referred to as 'sacred names' (*omana wamwaha*). In some instances the members of the age set give praises to one another and in some of these mocking praises substitute real or nicknames. Thus sometimes we find pieces of these mocking praises in real praises, especially in personal praises. For instance the nickname Tjeinja for the son of Kavirongo in epithet 8 of the praise of the Ovakwatjivi matrilineage and Tjijapa for Riarua in epithet 34 of the radio praise.

#### *Use of a proper name as a proper name and also as a common noun*

In praises it is common practice to use a proper name both as a proper name and simultaneously as a common noun. For instance Kondjupa 'Calabash' and Kondu 'Sheep' in epithet 2 and 8 in the praise of the Ovakwatjivi matrilineage are respectively used as proper names as well as common nouns. With this technique the oral poet tries to explain the origin of the particular name in a poetic way. It is actually not an explanation per se, but a tag labelling the particular person, or an allusion to the origin of his name.

### **11.1.12 Content of Praises**

When one compares praises of human beings, animals, places, lineages and new creations one may conclude that in human praises and praises of places the oral poet makes use of facts because of their historical significance. After one has read a sketch of Maharero's history above, one would expect to find reference to historical events in

his praise. This is not the case, and most of the historical events alluded to in his praise are of minor significance. Major events in his life are secondary to the expressions of admiration and glorification. His praise consists of the description of his physical characteristics and his behaviour as well as genealogical and historical references.

The animal praises are dominated by figurative descriptions. The animal's physical and behavioural attributes are figuratively described, while historically significant places, people and objects are used to praise a particular place in figurative ways.

Most keywords in praises of lineages are kinship terms such as *ovasya* 'nephews and nieces', *oohokuru* 'ancestors', *oonaa* 'mothers of', *ovasuko* 'daughters' and *ovanatje* 'children'. This strengthens the idea that the praises of lineages are a type of poetic ancestry.

I have only two praises of newly praised referents. One is a self praise where the informant Rev. Erastus Tutjavi praises himself (in appendix 6), and the other is the praise of the radio service as analysed in section 10.5. The self praise contains the information one may expect to find in a personal or human praise such as his physical description, heroic deeds, his relation to his ancestors and an embedded praise of his place of birth. The radio service is so humanised that it could act or be involved in lots of activities. Its praise contains the largest proportion of verbs in my corpus. It includes praises of places visited, names and praises of prominent individuals in the community, especially those whose deaths have been announced on radio and important events closely associated with particular individuals.

In praises, historical references are camouflaged by figurative use of the language and in condensed allusions, and, as Kunene (1971:36) puts it, "the result is poetry, not history". In praising, an oral poet moves between factual, imaginative and figurative descriptions of a referent at will, which makes praises the most complex products of Ovaherero oral tradition. The inclusion of one's genealogy and embedding other praises in a praise are two of the typical characteristics of our praising tradition. The

ancestry of the person being praised is also accompanied by praises of some ancestors, and by praises of other people closely associated with him in his life time.

Praising then is a means whereby an oral poet ascribes traits, attributes and personalities to a referent. These traits and personalities are ascribed to a specific referent by means of one of or a combination of the following techniques:

- Through physical description of the referent, e.g. description of the referent's physique, e.g. *ondindisengo* 'thick neck' in the Ovakwatjivi praise, epithet 9.
- Through depiction of the referent's actions, behaviour and words, e.g. *ongokoravitamba* 'plot-clearer' in the rhinoceros praise, epithet 7.
- Through portrayal of what are perceived to be the referent's innermost feelings, dreams and thoughts (largely in direct speech), e.g. *ndji zepa ri mu me ku potjikendo* 'kill me but I'll give you anxiety' in the giraffe praise, in Ohly 1990:56.
- Through a clear presentation of the referent's motives; i.e. why he does what he does, e.g. *i paha tjike* 'what does it look for?' *Okatjikongamambo* 'it's news-seeker' in the radio praise, epithet 21.
- Through comments and compliments by the oral poet himself, e.g. *okumene uri okuhepa* 'thank you very much' in the radio praise, epithet 35.

With these techniques the oral poet uses particular terms, concepts or objects (to represent images) in his descriptions that he judges to be appropriate to create the required picture or image in accordance with his own world view.

#### **11.1.13 Parallelism and Equivalence**

"Meaning always comes to us processed by the forms in which it is expressed"  
(Fowler 1977:22).

Short (1996:65) in general defines parallelism as "one of the devices which are used ... to open up associations; but it is important to note that, at the same time, it also

suppresses other non-relevant aspects of meaning”.

The purpose of parallelism and equivalence is to broaden and deepen an idea or image through additional connotations that are brought about by different but similar constructions of words, phrases and/or clauses. The oral poet manipulates parallelism and equivalence as stylistic techniques tailored to contribute to the description of the referent. Parallels are set so as to maximize the aesthetic interest of praises and whether he fails or succeeds, depends on his presentation and representation of reality through linguistic expressions.

In parallelism and equivalence, words are taken and matched with others in an aesthetic fashion, in order to produce the required descriptive effects. Such an arrangement of words is discussed here under parallelism and equivalence in turns.

#### **(a) Parallelism**

Various types of parallelism occur frequently in praises. Here we distinguish contrasting parallelism, the harnessing of synonyms and repetitive parallelism.

##### *Contrasting parallelism*

In praises oral poets make abundant use of parallel structures. The following example of contrasting parallels is taken from Maharero's praise, epithet 16.

Ovaṭena mave tja: ma munik' okarunga, ngunda

Ovaramwe amave tja: ma munik' ombindiro

His sisters say: look at that little head of his, while

His cousins say: look at that castration of his

Looking at these lines one may realise that in both lines the central parts are almost



identical. The difference is between *mave* and *amave*. The latter has an initial *a-* which is part of the connective *ngunda* ‘but/while’ which indicates a simultaneous execution of the parallel structures. When this connective is removed then this *a-* will automatically disappear.

When one removes the connective and unites the constants (or identical parts), the variables will stand out, and the pattern looks like this:

Ovaṭena		okarunga
	mave tja: ma munik'	
Ovaramwe		ombindiro
Sisters	little head	
	say: look at that	of his
Cousins	castration	

Now the variables (the parts that vary in both lines) and the constants (the parts that are repeated in both lines) are clearly visible. When the variables are removed from this structure, then the constant as the basic structure on which parallelism is based remains; as:

.....	mave tja: ma munik'	.....
.....	say: look at that	..... of his

Each of these slots may be completed either by antonyms or synonyms. In this praise they are filled by antonyms and linked to another by a connective; *ngunda* ‘but/while’. The opposition of the variables and the connective in the parallel patterns make the contrasting meaning of parallelism clear. In this example of parallelism *ovaṭena* ‘sisters’ and *okarunga* ‘little head’ contrast with *ovaramwe* ‘cross cousins’ and *ombindiro* ‘castrated scrotum’ (= circumcised penis) respectively. Although *okarunga* ‘little head’ and *ombindiro* ‘castrated scrotum’ both may refer to the round head of a circumcised penis, they are so exceptionally patterned to seem as if they are antonyms. The contrast is that one refers to something higher on the body (i.e the head) and the other at something lower (i.e. castrated scrotum). They are antonyms on the surface,

but synonyms in their deeper meanings.

The connective *ngunda* 'but/while' is used in this example to convey the meanings of both 'but' and 'while'. Its main function is to prepare the audience (or readers) for contrast and simultaneous execution of parallels.

### *Harnessing synonyms*

In praises we find instances where the oral poet yokes together words with the same or similar meanings in very close proximity. This kind of semantic repetition is a way of reinforcing or strengthening an idea by adding force, emphasis and clarity. Such a phenomenon is referred to in this thesis as harnessing synonyms. In ordinary speech such a 'repetition' is avoided as it may cause more confusion than clarity.

The oral poet harnesses two types of synonyms. He uses interchangeable synonyms and non-interchangeable synonyms. Sometimes, words with different meanings are used as synonyms. An example of each is given in the discussion below.

The oral poet states that Kahihemua (Ovakwatjivi, epithet 9) swallowed a limb of the ox of Mapa of Maore, *e ri pondikwa potjivereko* 'while he was on the carrying skin'. In Otjiherero *ondikwa* and *otjivereko* are interchangeable synonyms. Both mean carrying skin used by women to carry babies on their backs. Both are preceded by a locative marker *p(u)* 'on' as the constant shared (the [u] is elided). Through this the oral poet wants to reinforce the superhuman power that was invested in Kahimemua. Probably he showed this power while he was a baby.

In the praise of the radio the oral poet harnesses the following clauses.

e rizirire 'he answered himself'

e riitaverere 'he answered himself'

(Radio, epithet 28)

The verbs *zira* 'answer when asked' and *itavera* 'answer when called' are slightly different in their meanings. In the context of the praise the meanings of these two words come together, the core meaning of answering being understood in both cases. Note the prefixing of the reflexive morpheme *ri* (self) and the suffixing, *-ire* and *-ere* (perfect morphemes) to the verb radicals *-zir-* and *-itaver-* respectively.

Through parallelism, words with different meanings are harnessed in such a way that they are forced into an 'identical' meaning, as in the following example.

Oombe tu rya noombe tu mana  
Those who ate us and those who finished us  
(Ohly 1990:58; zebra)

In the above example, the verbs *rya* 'eat' and *mana* 'finish' are used in such a way in order for them to mean 'those who killed and ate all of us'. Within this parallel frame the oral poet pairs them so that their meanings converge. In so doing, he merges their meanings.

### *Repetitive parallelism*

A word may be paired with itself or its slightly different variant as in the next example. This example is actually a combination of a repetitive parallelism and harnessing of synonyms.

Kunguna tu kungune  
Tatapa tu tatape  
Trot let's trot  
Thump let's thump  
(Hyena, epithets 19 and 20, appendix 2)

In this case *kunguna* and *kungune* as well as *tatapa* and *tatape* differ in the final vowel

only. Their meanings are stressed through their repetition. Here we do not find repetition of words only, but also repetition of sounds. Repetition of the same sound fairly close together so that they echo each other strengthens the meaning and structure of these repeated parallels.

The verbs are onomatopoeic words, *kunguna* 'trot' and *tatapa* 'thump' or 'gallop' imitate the movement of a hyena at different running speeds. A strong correlation exists between their phonetic shapes and their meanings and the sound pattern pleases the mouth in articulation and the ear in hearing it.

I infer from these examples that the vowels in this parallelism are used to mimic the rhythm and sound of the actions of a hyena. The high vowel [u] mimes trotting - a hard slow running, while the low vowel [a] is mimicking a soft and smooth galloping speed. In fact these words are imitating the sounds made by the paws of the hyena, and the sounds mock the actions. The rhythm of sounds, actions and meanings converge in the praise in a harmonious way.

The next example is more expanded than the preceding one. These three epithets (18, 19 and 20) of the Maharero's praise are parallelistically patterned. This parallelism is a realisation of an expanded reiterating parallelism. These epithets are structured as follows:

Ongu ri ye omuini

Omuhona omunyeṇanyene otjovizire koutokero

Ongu ri ye omuini

Omuhona ngu ya hungire e riitaverere otjozondjimbi

Ii, ongu ri ye omuini

Omuhona ngwa tuṭumine rumwe nombura ai tjeke kOngandjera

It's him

The shining chief like shadows at sunset

It's him

The chief who talks and answers himself like owls

Yes, it's him

The chief who thundered once and the rain fell at Ongandjera

The first line recurs with the last repetition slightly altered by the addition of yes. The three lines that interrupt repetition are patterned in the same way, each of which starts with *omuhona* 'chief/wealthy person' which is followed by a complement which is equivalent to, but different from, those of the other two. The first complement consists of an adjective *omunyenanyene* 'shining' that is compared to the shadow at sunset. The other two complements are both relative clauses.

### **(b) Equivalence<sup>105</sup>**

Equivalence differs from parallelism in the fact that the equivalently patterned phrases or clauses do not share constants or repeated words or grammatical morpheme(s), as in the following examples.

Kuwoko henga ngo!

Kurama teza!

Mutjira komba!

Kutwi puratena!

Ndeku tupukisa!

Arm move forward!

Leg follow!

Tail sweep!

Ear listen!

Tapeworm make run!

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<sup>105</sup>

Equivalence is used here to mean the underlying syntactic and structural parallelism (patterns of similarity in form and function).

These lines are equivalent in the sense that they are arranged in the same way; i.e. **subject** (noun) and **verb**. Thus these clauses are patterned in a sequence which makes them similar in syntactic form and function.

The nouns are comparable in that four of the five are parts of the body, with the exception of *ondeku* 'tapeworm'. Although *ondeku* 'tapeworm' is a parasite, it becomes part of the body as it lives in the intestines of a living being. The *ondeku* 'tapeworm' in this pattern of equivalents represents greed or hunger. Since greed and hunger are abstract terms, the oral poet visualizes and vitalizes it by associating it with the verb *tupukisa* 'make run'. Thus in this pair of equivalents the word *ondeku* 'tapeworm' represents the intestines as a body part. In this sense it fits well to be matched with the other parts. The *ondeku* 'tapeworm' occurs in the last line associated with *tupukisa* 'make run' because the oral poet believes greed serves as the force behind the hyena's speed. With this pattern the normal meaning of the word *ondeku* 'tapeworm' is suppressed. These verbs suggest an action or movement in an ordered way.

These common nouns are personified as if they were proper names. For this reason the initial vowel *o-* of each is elided which makes the nouns vocative expressions. The verbs are imperative expressions with which the hyena commands its body parts in the same way a military officer orders or commands his troops. The hyena itself is the officer that commands his troops; i.e. its body parts. With this pattern the oral poet compares hunting with battle, patterned in a 'military' style. Each part is commanded as if it acts individually and with this the oral poet reinforces the cooperative importance of the individual responsibility of each part since each part is responsible for the execution of a particular action or function. These functions are not executed in isolation, but as a unified collective effort in hunting, and thus patterned in a tidy sequence of equivalents. Thus hunting is a shared effort - helpfulness of each body part for the well-being of the whole body (or hyena) is required. The hyena's distinct organs function in their diverse but inter-related ways.

With these clauses the oral poet stresses a coordinated motion of different body parts in hunting. Similar to soldiers who march to strike their enemy, parts march to track down a prey. These commands serve as encouragement to enhance cooperation, 'unity is strength' is the central message conveyed by these equivalently patterned clauses.

Besides the equivalence discussed this far, epithets in a praise are equivalently structured. At this more abstract level of equivalence, equivalents are not as obvious as in such successive lines as discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Each epithet is equivalent to another in the sense that each consists of a keyword and its complement(s). The recursive subordination consistently creates equivalent patterns in epithets. This shows the consistency in the form of the epithets.

In a praise as a whole, epithets are equivalently patterned in relation to the referent they modify. Balanced pairings through equivalence is a prominent stylistic feature in Otjiherero praises. Looked at it in a more abstract sense the praises consistently display a common structure of equivalents which, presumably, accommodates free flow of thoughts and imagination. Analogically, epithets in a praise are equivalently hinged on the referent. They are strung together in a series of equivalent descriptive units around the referent in a structure which may be captured by the following rewrite rules used to generate the R-E structure of praises.

**Diagram 15:** *The R-E Rules for Generating Praise Sentences*

PrS	→	Ref Epith
Epith	→	(LinkE) KwP
KwP	→	Kw <sup>106</sup> Comp
Comp	→	(LinkE) HwP
HwP	→	Hw Comp
.....		
Kw	→	common noun, proper noun, pronoun or verb
Hw	→	common noun, proper noun, sometimes a phrase or also pronoun in very limited instances
KwP/HwP	→	noun phrase or verb phrase
Comp	→	noun phrase, preposition phrase, noun, adjective, demonstrative, possessive phrase, relative clause and anything in descriptive function

On the basis of this principle of equivalence based on distribution of information, each epithet is generated with the aid of the R-E grammar as shown in the above diagram. This R-E grammar may be viewed as capturing the basic oral formulas the oral poets use in their creation during performance, in the repetition of what they acquire in their life time, and in the innovation of what they compose or repeat.

#### 11.1.14 The Oral Formula

“Grammar rules live in the unconscious in the sense that you can know how to use the rules and even how to set up new rules without being able to state what they are.”  
(Ong 1982: 82)

The oral formula theory first proposed by Parry and Lord designates an approach to oral and oral-derived texts that explains the performance and transmission of texts through a series of structural units. The ‘formulaic system’ consists of a set of formulas that share a common pattern of phraseology. It “provides the performer with a malleable, ready-made idiom that simplifies the task of oral composition in performance”, as John Miles Foley in Preminger and Brogan (1993:866) remarks. Thus an oral formula lends confidence and becomes a source of lavish composition,

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<sup>106</sup> The keyword may be understood as a sub-referent, the headword as a sub-keyword, and the complement as a sub-epithet.



repetition and innovation.

Scholars of oral literature such as Lord (1960), Ong (1982), Kunene (1971), Opland (1983), Gunner (1984) and others are all of the opinion that oral poets compose their praises in performance. For detailed critical discussion of oral formulas see Opland (1983) chapter 6 and Foley (1988) for historic assessment. Scholars agree that an oral formula exists with which an oral poet can compose during performance, but differ in their recognition of that oral formula. With the exception of Opland (1983) and Kunene (1971), many agree that the 'repeated word groups' (or repeated word patterns) are the oral formulas. This thesis supports Kunene's eulogue-to-narrative formula<sup>107</sup>, Parry's noun-epithet system (as briefly discussed by Russo 1976:38), Russo's (1976:49) ideas of "structural patterning of the language in formulaic moulds that may be filled a variety of ways" and Opland's views as far as the structure of the *dithoko* of Southern Sotho and the *izibongo* of the Xhosa are concerned. But first a brief discussion on how some of the other scholars view the oral formula(s).

According to the Parry-Lord theory a formula is a group of words which is regularly employed to express an idea. Lord's (1960) findings and insights into the study of South Slavic oral narrative poetry in Yugoslavia contributed significantly to the present scholarly understanding and debate on oral formula, and many scholars applied a similar oral-formulaic analysis to many texts to substantiate the principle that oral poets do not memorise praises but compose them in the act of performance. Lord (1960) believes that themes are the basic building blocks of the oral formula. He (1960:4) defines a theme as "the repeated incidents and descriptive passages in the songs". He distinguishes individual and regional formulas as the two levels of an oral formula. According to him the individual formula is the purest of the two and it is used by an individual singer, while the regional one is used by the majority of singers in the region.

Opland (1983:155) is of the opinion that an oral poet "needs the formulas, formulaic

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<sup>107</sup> Kunene (1971) alludes to his eulogue-to-narrative formula in passing, and it needs to be refined and explained in detail.

expressions, and themes to compose ... in performance". He (1983:167) admits that a finding which may perhaps satisfy the definition of an oral formula used by oral poets to compose in performance "must be left to other researchers qualified perhaps in linguistics or psychology to explain exactly how *imbongi* performs". He is convinced that an oral formula indeed exists that allows the oral poets to compose in performance, but he refuses to accept the 'repeated word groups' as oral formulas as suggested by other scholars such as Lord (1960), Ong (1982) and Gunner (1984).

As Opland (1983:183) remarks "for Ong, as for Lord, the formula is recognized through repetition". Ong's (1982:34) perception of oral formulas is highlighted in the following quotation, and he states

"In a primary oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence. Your thought must come into being in heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or antithesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and formulary expressions, in standard thematic settings".

Gunner (1984) argues that generative patterns and oral formulas are different. She identifies 'repeated word groups' as oral formulas and classifies her oral formulas into fixed, flexible and shorter formulas. Her fixed formulas are equivalent to the use of metaphors as analogues. Her flexible formulas are similar to the parallel patterns, and the shorter formulas are the frequently repeated phrases and clauses. She considers these formulas on the basis of fixity, flexibility, figurative language, syntactic and semantic structures.

Kunene (1971) is perhaps the closest equivalent to the subject of this section. His paragraphs are identified on the basis of the central idea, similar to our epithets that are based on independent key information. His eulogue-to-narrative formula is the useful formula in contrast to those of other scholars, and is an equivalent of our R-E structure presented here. Both are based on a similar principle, i.e. the central idea or key information.

This thesis concludes that what has been explained elsewhere by the oral formula is explained for Otjiherero praises by the R-E grammar, which generates the syntax of praises, because they have their own special 'grammar' which is in a way different from the ordinary grammar of Otjiherero. The grammar of Otjiherero praises is based on the manipulation and/or exploitation of certain grammatical properties of the ordinary grammar of Otjiherero such as post-modification, absence of an overt copulative verb in the present tense and the concordance system, as explained in section 11.1 above. The oral poets of Otjiherero praises do not necessarily compose in performance, but speak the grammar of praises with the competence of a native speaker which enables them to say anything what they wish to say. Opland (1983:154) rightly remarks "to enable him to compose in performance ..., the singer masters through a period of conscious apprenticeship and training an elaborate grammar of words, phrases, and ideas that facilitates the spontaneous creation of his tale". They do not only compose, they also repeat and innovate or amend in performance according to their descriptive needs.

The basic foundation of this R-E grammar as generating praise sentences is that the oral poet slots his words intuitively and spontaneously into the R-E patterns. With this grammar oral poets are able to convert prose into a praise or to switch from ordinary speech to praising at will when need arises. In ordinary speech in which a person or an oral poet spices his speech with praises, code-switching between the two grammar systems is interesting, an interesting topic to be pursued in future research.

"For just as the narrator of the Ozidi story organizes the numerous fight episodes in parallel sequences along the central theme of Ozidi invincibility, so the Zulu *imbongi* organizes the diverse attributes and achievements of Shaka in a parallel order built around the central theme of his ferocity" (Okpewho 1992:82). In the same way, in Otjiherero praises an oral poet organises epithets around the referent, as the core or central focus of praising. This is what the oral poet does with the R-E grammar.

The independence of information in each epithet lends a degree of flexibility to the

praise. It allows the oral poet to change the order of epithets, to leave out some in different performances of the same praise, to create new and drop the old epithets or to choose epithets at will. Swapping, altering or dropping some epithets in performances does not disturb the spontaneity or fluency of his praising, and does not affect the effect that praises have on the audience. The oral poet chooses, emphasizes and alters them to fit the occasion, because he is not only a praiser but also a careful observer of the situation which he then manipulates.

The flexibly dynamic character of the R-E formula makes it sensitive and flexible to new contexts. As Mukařovský (1970:54-5) summarises the poetic language in general, praises give “the language the ability to adjust more flexibly to new requirements and it gives it a richer differentiation of its means of expression”. This flexibility allows the oral poet to compose new praises which are structurally similar to those he already knows. One might see differently patterned praises in the future, as new contexts unfold and social contexts change. We have already seen, for instance, the radio praise which is similar, but different, to all other praises in our study. It has introductory and concluding epithets, some epithets flow out of the preceding ones or prepare the ground for the next.

Although much work needs to be done one might assume that the R-E grammar is gradually acquired in the same way a child acquires his native or first language. In this way the oral poets or members of the particular speech community in which the praise tradition is practised may be viewed as ‘native speakers’ of the ‘grammar’ of praises, as already explained in section 6.2. As John Miles Foley in Preminger and Brogan (1993: 867) remarks “over generations [they] had assembled an adaptable diction and a flexible ... repertoire”. Albert Bates Lord in Preminger (1993: 863) also states

“when he has become proficient in thinking in the traditional patterns , incl. the traditional phrases and everything else like them, he is a full-fledged singer of oral traditional poetry. In essence, he has learned to speak - or to sing - the special language of that poetry. He composes naturally in the forms of his tradition, unconsciously, and ... rapidly as a native speaker speaks a language”.

Finally, the 'repeated word groups' such as parallelism are mnemonic patterns which may or may not be used, and without which a praise may exist. The mnemonic patterns help the oral poet to stress, spice and reinforce ideas. They are not the compositional formulas which generate a praise.

## **11.2 General Conclusion**

One of the main purposes of praising and praises is the description of the referent. The meanings of each part of a praise structure are meant to describe the referent. Interpretation of a syntactic entity in relation to entities preceding and following it is of great importance in exposing the ways in which the language encodes descriptive ideas.

Otjiherero praises have a peculiar oral poetic grammar which is its medium of expression, and its grammar has a particular structure, the R-E structure, as its system of how its parts fit and function together.

Therefore R-E grammar generates the syntax of the praises. A high degree of compounding, manipulation of voice, imagery, parallelism and equivalence are significant poetic stylistic features that typify praises and distinguish them from ordinary speech. The R-E structure and these stylistic features are collectively, as Aspel (1976:195) puts it, "linguistic tools used for the purpose of achieving the poetic discourse". These features may be conceived of as accommodating a free flow of thoughts and imagination, or as mnemonic devices that unconsciously aid the memory of the oral poet, during the rapid delivery of praises in performance. A skilful blend of all these features is a powerful weapon in the hands of the sharp and observant oral poet to bring out the desired meanings and effects.

In this thesis the concept oral poet is used as a representative of the community as a whole, because most praises are communal property. Oral poets do not own the

authorship of praises, though they may claim the authorship of the new creations, especially when reduced to writing. Tisani (1994:169) captures the striking features of oral tradition when he summarises it as follows:

“Oral tradition is a body of information that belongs to a particular group of people. Its continued existence is by word of mouth which is passed from generation to generation. What gets passed and how that is done is decided by what the communal mind deems important to preserve. Further, the vehicles of transmission are formats that have been fashioned by the community itself. Oral tradition, therefore, is group property, reflective of the collective mind to which it belongs. .... as it is the story that the people have carried from the past, and are responsible for passing on to future generations .... Therefore, the crucial function of oral tradition, which tends to be overlooked, is that it helps create communal identity through unity of experience in the past. It enhances a sense of togetherness that is sanctified by the mystery of the distant past.”

This thesis considers a praise as a combined form which is directly co-determined by the pragmatic, syntactic and semantic configurations of linguistic expressions.

Hopefully the framework which is adopted in this thesis deals with Otjiherero praises in a more revealing and insightful manner, because praises are highly dependent on these three levels of linguistic expression.

Scholarly study of Namibian oral tradition in general and oral literature in particular, particularly oral poetry, is a new field of study. Further scholarly investigations and criticism will hopefully supplement and strengthen the findings that have emerged from this study.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

**Table 3: Otjiherero Concordance System**

Person	Class	Pronoun	Class/tense markers			Relative markers	
			hab	past	pres	hab	past
<b>I</b>	sg	ami	mbi	mba	me	ngu mbi	ngu mba
	pl	eṭe	tu	twa	matu	mbu tu	mbu twa
<b>II</b>	sg	ove	u	wa	mo	ngu u	ngu wa
	pl	eṇe	mu	mwa	mamu	mbu mu	mbu mwa
<b>III</b>	1	omu-	u	wa	ma	ngu	ngwa
	2	ova-	ve	va	mave	mbe	mba
	1a	Ø	u	wa	ma	ngu	ngwa
	2a	oo-	ve	va	mave	mbe	mba
	3	omu-	u	wa	mau	mbu	mbwa
	4	omi-	vi	vya	mavi	mbi	mbya
	5	e-	ri	ra	mari	ndi	nda
	6	oma-	ye	ya	ma(y)e	nge	nga
	7	otji-	tji	tja	matji	tji tji	tji tja
	8	ovi-	vya	vya	mavi	mbi	mbya
	9	o(N)-	i	ya	mai	ndji	ndja
	10	ozo(N)-	ze	za	maze	nḡe	nḡa
	11	oru-	ru	rwa	maru	ndu	ndwa
	12	otu-	tu	twa	matu	tu tu	tu twa
	13	oka-	ke	ka	make	ku ke	ku ka
	14	ou-	u	wa	mau	mbu	mbwa
	15	oku-	ku	kwa	maku	ku ku	ku kwa
	16	pu	pe	pa	mape	pu pe	pu pa
	17	ku	ku	kwa	maku	ku ku	ku kwa
	18	mu	mu	mwa	mamu	mu mu	mu mwa
	19	ou-	u	wa	mau	mbu	mbwa
	6+19	omau-	ye	ya	maye	nge	nga
	20	oku-	ku	kwa	maku	ku ku	ku kwa
	6	oma-	ye	ya	maye	nge	nga
	6+20	omaku-	ye	ya	maye	nge	nga

## Appendix 2

### Animals

#### Ombungu (Hyena)

- 1 **Oohokuru** Kombungu  
*yOmutjimba*  
*waKarukua*
- 2 **Ondovazu**  
*konganda ku i he ere*  
*ya tir'*  
*oongwa* pata na ngwa korora
- 3 **Ondwez'**  
*osembarovazu*  
*Kandamba*  
*kaKatjiuari*  
*oomama*  
*mukaa*  
Kongombe  
*ku va* tjirwa amave ri ozonyosa
- 4 **Omatwi**  
*wongombe*  
*yaTjave*  
*tjaTjomuzi*  
*nga tenga kotjiuru*  
ozonya aze hi ye ya
- 5 **Okotjitambazumo**  
*aayo i* rara meheke
- 6 **Omiti**  
*omiwa*  
*aayo vi* ngwina
- 7 **Okapa**  
*kondondũ*
- 8 **Orunanga**  
*rokauru*
- 9 **Ekuv'**  
omuhere
- 10 **Otjitambatundu**  
*tjozohongo*
- 11 **Onyanda**  
*yooNdingua*  
*Ndingua*  
*wokoyoo*Kaputa
- 12 **"Kuwoko** henga ngo!
- 13 **Kurama** teza!

- 14 **Mutjira** komba!  
 15 **Kutwi** puratena!  
 16 **Ndeku** tupukisa!  
 17 **Kambezemunu**  
     nu mbe ze sere wina  
     ku esa ku were  
 18 **Katjari**  
     katate  
     ndji pao *outjapu*  
             wet'  
             ouwa  
     me katjirwa *kovivanda*  
             vvet'  
             oviwa  
             *kongotwe*  
             yavyo  
             ku nomisema vi kanuwa  
             *ozomboo*  
             zamukunda  
                     mbwina  
             za kandera *tjike*  
                             tate mahoze
- 19 **Kunguna** tu kungune!  
 20 **Tatapa** tu tatapel!  
 21 **Omeho**  
     mba upike  
     a rir' ovitwaho  
 22 **Omayo**  
     mba upike  
     a rir' ovitwayo  
 23 **Omatwi**  
     mba upike  
     a rir' ovitwatwi  
 24 **Omuandukwa**  
     me katwa komake  
 25 **Omuamwaha**  
     me ku yetere"  
 26 **Ombind'**  
     okerama

- 
- 1 **Ancestors** *Komungu*  
             of *Omutjimba*  
                     of Karukua  
 2 The **grey**  
     a *homestead*  
     to which it did not come  
         it was afraid

- of who sneezed and who coughed
- 3     **The bull**  
       the greyish  
       *Kandamba*  
       of Katjiuari  
       from which *mothers*  
                               *wives*  
                               of Kongombe  
                   ate roasted meat in the morning
- 4     **The ears**  
       of the *cattle*  
       of *Tjave*  
                   of Tjomuzi  
       which *first came head-on*  
                   before horns appear
- 5     **The flat-belly**  
       as if it sleeps on sand
- 6     **The tree**  
       the *beautiful*  
       as if far away
- 7     **The branch**  
       of a river
- 8     **The glue**  
       with a small head
- 9     **The axe**  
       a stalkless
- 10    **The flat-old-homestead**  
       with devil thorns
- 11    **The caprine**  
       of *Ndingua*  
       Ndingua  
       of Kaputa
- 12    **“Arm** move forward!
- 13    **Leg** follow!
- 14    **Tail** sweep!
- 15    **Ear** listen!
- 16    **Tapeworm** make run!
- 17    **I-saw-them**  
       but I left them  
       let it darken
- 18    **Katjari**  
       of my father  
       give me sandals  
                   of ours  
                   good  
       I am going to spend the morning at the *hillocks*  
                                   of ours

behind them  
there are *sandwells*  
from which should be drunk  
why are *ozomboo shrubs*  
of that side curdled  
my father Mahoze

- 19 **Trot** let's trot!  
20 **Thump** let's thump!  
21 The **eyes**  
I sharpened  
they became sharpened-eyes  
22 The **teeth**  
I sharpened  
they became sharpened-teeth  
23 The **ears**  
I sharpened  
they became sharpened-ears  
24 The **secular**  
I'll touch it  
25 The **sacred**  
I'll bring it to you"  
26 The **spotted**  
with the ugly leg  
(Ohly 1990: 59-61)

### Appendix 3

#### Places (versions)

##### Okahandja (Jackson Kaujeua - version B)

- 1     **Kewe**  
      raKarukua  
      ndi *pos'*  
          aayo ri *nomundu*  
                          moukoto
- 2     **Ketundu**  
      rahi  
      yaKeja
- 3     **Kekunde**  
      raTjambi
- 

- 1     At the **stone**  
      of Karukua  
      that *sounds*  
          as if it has a *person*  
                          inside
- 2     At the **old-homestead**  
      of the *father*  
          of Keja
- 3     At the **bean**  
      of Tjambi  
(Transcribed from his tape and translated by me)

##### Okahandja (Jarimbovandu Kaputu - version C)

- 1     **Okewe**  
      raKarukua  
      ndi mari *pos' ohinini*  
          aayo mu *nomundu*  
                          moukoto
- 2     **Okotjimbuku**  
      tjozondu  
          zahokuru *Mujemua*  
                          Mujemua  
                          waTjondivizu
- 3     **Oekwamo**  
      raKapehuri  
      kaKamutikirua  
      ewa

rozombamba  
ovikonya

4 Okew'

ongongo

ndi ri komuatje

waKangu

kozonyanda

wahokuru Tjimanangombe

yaHengua

ihe

ouhona

mbwa pita nao

owozonyara komake

ndi ri komuatje

waEnditja

waKutako

waMungunda

muna

Kavikua

kaTjanda

tjaMaaua

waMaandomare

ingwi onguv'

otjondana

---

1 It's at the **stone**

of Karukua

that's sounding ohinini

as if it has a *person*

inside

2 It's at the **spike-thorn tree**

of the *sheep*

of ancestor *Mujemua*

Mujemua

of Tjondivizu

3 It's at the **belt**

of Kapehuri

the beautiful

with *decorations*

nice

4 It's at the **stone**

the beautiful

that's on the *child*

of *Kangu*

of the caprines

of ancestor Tjimanangombe

his father  
*chieftaincy was born with*  
like nails on hands  
that is on the *child*  
of Enditja  
of Kuṭako  
of Mungunda  
*son*  
of Kavikua  
of Tjanda  
of Mauua  
of Maandomare  
that with a goitre  
like a calf

(Tape recorded, on 5 July 1998 in Windhoek, transcribed and translated by me)

**Okahandja** (Ndauroo Tjouṭuku - version D)

- 1     **Mewe**  
       raKarukua  
       ndi pos'  
           aayo mu nomundu  
                           moukoto
- 2     **Motjimbuku**  
       tjozonḡu  
           zaMujemua
- 3     **Mekwamo**  
       raKapehuri  
       rozombamb'  
           ovikonya
- 4     **Mekunde**  
       raTjambi  
       ongombe  
           yaMuhak'  
           yaTjaitja  
               tjaMbeja  
                   waMukende  
           onganga  
           yomatako  
               owa nga ri poomukaa  
                                   Kariahuua  
                                   wongombe  
                                   yaKajona  
                                   yaKorukui
- 5     **Mohorongo**  
       yaKaṭunu  
       otjikururume



- 6        **Mohapatwa**        tjonganya  
              yaKarovi  
              ozombandi ai na zo
- 7        **Mewe**  
              otjomurenge  
                      owozongoro  
                      zokuti
- 8        **Metundu**  
              rahi  
              yaMaheke *Tjombe*  
                              *yamukaza*  
                              Kejao
- 9        **Mondjuwo**  
              yomukazendu  
                      waTjiponda
- 10       **Movitjuma**  
              vyamukaza  
                      Suva
- 11       **Mozongeyama**  
              zaTjeruka  
                      waMauano
- 

- 1        In the **stone**  
              of Karukua  
              that *sounds*  
                      as if there is a *person*  
    inside
- 2        In the **spike-thorn tree**  
              of the *sheep*  
                      of Mujemua
- 3        In the **belt**  
              of Kapehuri  
              with *decorations*  
    nice
- 4        In the **bean**  
              of Tjambe  
              the *cow*  
                      of Muhake  
                      of Tjaitja  
                              of Mbeja  
                                      of Mukende  
              the guinea-fowl  
              with *buttocks*  
                      that had been on the *wives*  
    of *Kariahnuu*  
    of the *cattle*

of Kajona  
of Tjorukui

- 5 In the **kudu**  
    of Kaṭunu  
    the old  
    with an untannable hide
- 6 In the **non-buttoned**  
    of Karovi  
    while it has buttons
- 7 In the **stone**  
    with the *mane*  
    like *zebras*  
        of the wild
- 8 In the **old-homestead**  
    of the *father*  
        of Maheke *Tjombe*  
            of the *wife*  
                of Kejao
- 9 In the **house**  
    of the *wife*  
        of Tjiponda
- 10 In the **beads**  
    of the *wife*  
        of Suva
- 11 In the **lions**  
    of *Tjeruka*  
        of Mauano  
(Tape recorded, on 8 August 1998 in Okahandja, transcribed and translated by me)

Personal praises

**Tjiponda** (Chief K. Tjiho)

- 1      wa ya kozonḁa  
            zongundwe  
                Nguendje  
                    Nguendje  
                        wanaa  
                            Muherero  
                        omuho  
                            wokuwoko  
                            mbu he ri wakurama
- 2      **Tjiponda**  
            yongombe  
                yaNandumbu  
                yaKaseu'  
                evamba  
                    ronganda  
                        yaMbunga  
                        nda hungira Kavari
- 3      **Tjiponda**  
            wahi  
                yaTovekua  
                na hi  
                    yaNangombe  
                        yongombe  
                            yaKaruuombe
- 4      **Tjiponda**  
            wamukaa  
                Korutjɛɛ  
                    orutjɛɛ  
                        rwamukaza  
                            Tjandɛro
- 5      **Tjiponda**  
            oove wa is' omukazendu  
                metundu  
                ama riri  
                ame riyarikaḁa  
                ama pos' owa Karukarua  
                            waMiheke  
                            na Kombi  
                                yaNauzemba  
                            nouarikaze

wonder' oruwo

6 **Tjiponda**

wa is' *ongombe*

*yoo*hi

ya*Koutengarindi*

*outengarindi*

mbwaa uteng' okutemunwa

nau kasenina *nombav'*

ondeu

Kahengwa metundu

aya kwata na ya pandjara

7 **Orutjeno**

rwa rara k*Otjamuriango*

otjihwairi

*tjombonde Majao*

yamukaza

Hengari

*mama Kazemo*

waMukuanimi

8 **Tjiponda**

yaruka kozonda

zongundwee

*Nguendje*

wanaa

Muherero

*omutambo*

u ri mondjuwo

kau yapirura

wa ende *nongomb'*

*otjitundu*

ondwite

ondanambe

wa munikw' *ondwa*

yaTambira

*yovirur'*

ovitanambe

avya kwata korui k*Otjamuriango*

*otjihwairi*

nu tji ve mu munu ave tja:

"o*Katjuro*

waTuvar'

omur'

ozongoro

ngwa ri *pombwa*

yaVikokorero"

"ovizeze

kangu ri ye"

“oKamaisakua<sup>ni</sup>  
     waKamue  
             kaHauanga”  
 “ovizeze  
     kangu ri ye”  
 “oNgeretjeo  
     yongombe  
         yaManga<sup>ni</sup>  
         yaMarir’  
         ombonde”  
 “kangu ri ye”  
 otjikururume  
     tjomeva momeho  
         otja ami nai  
 atji tja:  
     “Vatwa! Ondundu  
         yaTjamuriango  
         ya tjiti vi  
     tji mamu pendur’ *omundu*  
         amu twara ngwi amu kotora  
         amu twara ngwi amu kotora  
     mozombepo ma haa kukamunik’  
         otjombepo  
                 orukumbambura  
     mozohorongongo ma haa kukamunik’  
         otjohorongongo  
                 ondwezu  
                 aya riwa naya sew’ *oma<sup>ni</sup>upa*  
   porwao  
     eye ngo ongu ri ye Pumbikaengombe  
     na indj’ *ombw’*  
         ondumbu  
         oyo ndjo are”

- 
- 1       (he) went to the *mourning ceremony*  
             of his uncle  
                 Nguendje  
                 Nguendje  
                     of the mother  
                         of Muherero  
                             shin-bone of foreleg and not of hind-leg
- 2       **Tjiponda**  
         of the *cattle*  
             of Nandumbu  
             of Kaseua  
             the *senior*  
                 of the *homestead*

- of Mbunga  
that was told by Kavari
- 3     **Tjiponda**  
       of the *father*  
       of Tovekua  
       and the *father*  
       of Nangombe  
       of the *cattle*  
       of Karuumombe
- 4     **Tjiponda**  
       of the *wife*  
       of Korutjenge  
       the *steep-faced rock*  
       of Tjandero
- 5     **Tjiponda**  
       you left your *wife*  
       in an old homestead  
       while crying  
       and pleading  
       sounding  
       like Karukarua  
       of Miheke  
       and Kombi  
       of Mauzemba  
       and the mercy *oruwo bird*  
       with chicks
- 6     **Tjiponda**  
       you left the *cow*  
       of the *father*  
       of Koutengarindi  
       the *first-water pools*  
       that receive first rain  
       and dry up last  
       the *sacred*  
       of Kahengwa in the old homestead  
       calved and lost
- 7     The **lightning** slept at Otjamuriango  
       the great  
       of the *piebald Mayao*  
       of the *wife*  
       of Hengari  
       mother Kazemo  
       of Mukuanimi
- 8     **Tjiponda**  
       return to the *mourning ceremony*  
       of your *uncle*  
       Nguendje

it is still in the hut  
 it didn't leave yet  
 he came with the *cow*  
 the piebald  
 pregnant  
 with calf  
 he was seen by the *homestead*  
 of Tambira  
 of the *ghosts*  
 with kids  
 at the *water point*  
 of *Otjamuriango*  
 the great  
 when they saw him they said:  
 "he's *Katjuro*  
 of Tuvare  
 the tall  
 with knees  
 who killed the dog at Ovikokorero"  
 "it's lies  
 it's not him"  
 "he's *Kamaisakuaṇi*  
 of *Kamue*  
 of Hauanga"  
 "it's lies  
 it's not him"  
 "he's Ngeretjeo  
 of the *cattle*  
 of Manganṇi  
 of Mariro  
 the piebald"  
 "it's not him"  
 an old man with water in his eyes like me said:  
 "Strangers!  
 What about the *mountain*  
 of Tjamuriango  
 why are you *taking the person*  
 from side to side from side to side  
 what's wrong  
 in the winds he looks  
 like the wind  
 wind-devil  
 in the kudus he looks  
 like a *kudu*  
 bull  
 which has been eaten

and left *dry bones*  
only

there is he Pumbikaengombe  
and the *dog*  
the yellowish  
is there too”

(Tape recorded, on 21 November 1998 in Gam, transcribed and translated by me)



Lineages

Ongweyuva patrilineage T. Kuvare)

- 1 ...  
    yozongomb'  
        omariva  
            owozondjamba  
        omukungwini  
            owozonganga  
        ehapu  
            owozonyutji  
        etapata  
            owozombuka
- 2 **Ongand'**  
    oyaKametujama  
        Kametujam'  
            omund'  
                onganda  
                    yaMutjise
- 3 ...  
    oyaKanjuku  
        Kanjuku  
            kenga  
                rohonga  
            ngu ma zeper' ovandu pombero  
                        yazondukwa
- 4 **Ondwezu**  
    ndja tjirwa pondjurwo  
        yanaa  
            Rujova  
            Tjijendje  
            yaKozondu  
                omahangu  
                    nge he ri ovirya  
            mu mwa tjirw' omuatje  
                wetu  
                omukundise  
                    ngwa ma kundis' ovandu  
                        yondjurwo  
                            yaina  
                                Kahonde  
                                    kaKamaneko  
                                omukoto

otjekaya  
rOvirumbu  
ehoz'  
okaekkeeke  
nda tjaer' ozombwa kombinda  
omuatje  
wamama Kazembua

5 **Onganda**

yozongomb'  
ovikoroona  
zonganda  
yaKandjii  
Kandjii  
waSeu

6 **Ondwezu**

yahi  
yaMbinda  
Mbinda  
yongombe  
yaKarukua  
ndja ri nesuzu monyama  
aay' ondambi

7 ...

oyaKavari  
kaTjozohongo  
komukandamasere

8 ...

oyaTjiueza  
tjeparu

9 ...

yozongombe  
zovitambo novimongo  
owa nda puk' ovirongo  
Otjombinde za urik'  
omaere  
waMbarahev'  
erindi  
raKaujeua  
za urike maze i koviṇa  
vyomongwa  
mbya muna Tjombe arir' omuyore  
okatjunda  
kozongune  
ku ka umbu Kuhanga  
Kavezembi a sye po ondovi  
yozondjon'  
omapitiro



- the *person*  
of the homestead  
of Mutjise
- 3     ...  
of Kanjuku  
Kanjuku  
with the *spear*  
with a point  
who killed people at the *mountain-pass*  
of butter calabashes
- 4     The **bull**  
that spent the morning at the *house*  
of the mother  
of Rujova  
*Tjijendje*  
of Kozondu  
*millet*  
that is not cereal  
where the *son*  
of ours  
spent the morning  
the *counter*  
who counted the *people*  
of the house  
of his mother  
*Kahonde*  
of Kamaneko  
the *crooked*  
like the tobacco  
of the White man  
the *grass*  
askewed  
that wards off dogs from the warthog  
the *son*  
of mother Kazembua
- 5     The **homestead**  
with the *piebald-cattle*  
of the homestead  
of Kandjii  
*Kandjii*  
of Seu
- 6     The **bull**  
of the father  
of *Mbinda*  
*Mbinda*  
of the cattle  
of Karukua

that *had foam in the meat*  
like lean

7 ...  
of Kavari  
of Tjozohongo  
of the milker-of-thousands

8 ...  
of Tjiueza  
with the bald-head

9 ...  
with cattle  
with backs  
as if they lost places  
*Otjombinde*  
*they aimed*  
the *sour milk*  
of Mbaraheva  
the *waterpool*  
of Kaujeua  
they aimed at *things*  
of salt  
that were seen by Tjombe and laughed  
the *wooded kraal made by Kuhanga*  
Kavezembi left a *hole*  
for the lambs' exit  
they passed there at the *green-grass*  
for sheep  
to go to *passage way*  
*Ndivizu*  
of Tjinamba  
the white with walls  
they entered *Kamanu Kamazorongondo*  
the black  
who *smelt*  
like a rhino cut through the mouth  
the *stones*  
of Kanguari  
the *anthill*  
of Karimba  
they entered the *stone-trough*  
in the *place*  
of Hiisana  
and of Ngaruka  
*they looked*  
like an aloe-person  
*they looked*  
like elephants

the walking  
of elephants  
that are with *Kandina*  
of the sands  
tjopotjopo *Utjo*  
with sources  
waterpools  
where Tjijangano was sent  
the house  
of the wife  
of Kaeru

(Tape recorded, on 24 September 1998 at Otjiǀoko, transcribed and translated by me)

New creations

Self praise (Rev. Erastus Tutjavi)

- 1 **Owami** Ndongororua Haupindi
- 2 **Ovirya**  
vya tuwa kotjini
- 3 **Omuzandu**  
waKauakongoro  
wanaa  
Mirora  
ngu utuk' osemba  
na kaw' ondurumika
- 4 **Ombombo**  
yaKanihov'  
omuzeu
- 5 **Omukurutjutju**  
waKaijata  
kaHembonge
- 6 **Omunen'**  
omaoko kongotwe  
otjongombe
- 7 **Omuatje**  
wetu  
oka*ti*  
otjongero  
ngwa rambuka  
ozongombe  
zao  
aza henga
- 8 **Ongero**  
yaJaahama
- 9 **Omundu**  
omuangu  
waTueembo
- 10 ...  
ngu mba kwaterwa mokarui  
kozondera  
kaake nuw' omapenda  
ovingundi avi kaenda kozongoro  
ketati  
raMbunga  
narire keyandja  
rozongombe

*Tjizumba*  
     yamukaa  
         Hange  
     korukaku  
         rwaMahuno  
             yongombe  
                 yaMberikarera  
                 ndji posa mezumo  
                     aayo okaṇa komomeva  
     mozonduwombe  
         zaMbaranganga

---

- 1     **I** am Ndongororua Haupindi
- 2     The **cereals**  
        are pound on a stamper
- 3     The **son**  
        of Kauakongoro  
        of the *mother*  
            of Mirora  
        who runs straight  
        and falls face-wards
- 4     The **brave**  
        of Kanihova  
        the heavy
- 5     The **old**  
        of Kaijāṭa  
        of Hembonge
- 6     The **big**  
        with *arms behind*  
                     like an *ongombe* bird
- 7     The **child**  
        of ours  
        the small  
        who is *thin*  
                     while the cows  
                                 of theirs  
                                 produce enough milk
- 8     The **last-born**  
        of Jaahama<sup>108</sup>
- 9     The **person**  
        the *junior*

---

<sup>108</sup>     His senior wife. When I asked him why he includes his wife as his mother, he jokingly answered that his mother died and his wife replaces her, and thus his daughter is his sibling.



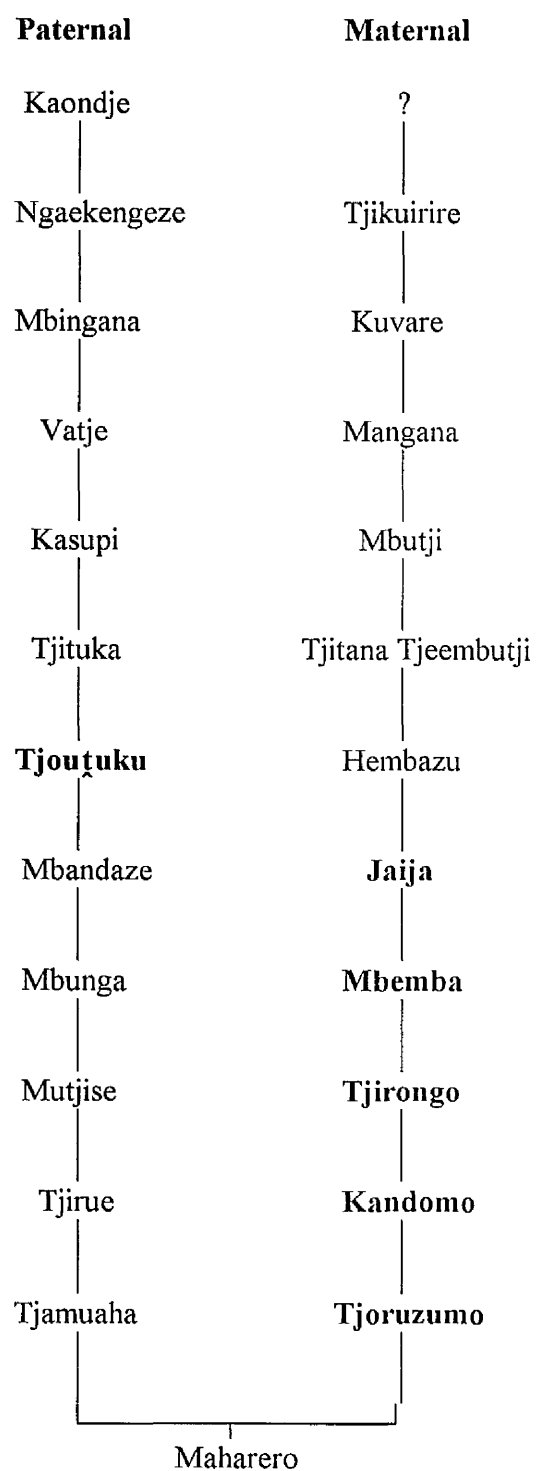
10

...

who I was born in the *waterpoint*  
    of the birds  
    that *was drunk by the brave ones*  
        the weak ones walk on their knees  
    at the *mopane-bush*  
        of Mbunga  
    and the *place*  
        of the cattle  
    *Tjizumba*  
        of the wife  
            of Hange  
    at the *shoe*  
        of *Mahumo*  
            of the ox  
                of Mberikarera  
                that *sounds in its stomach*  
                    like a water-insect  
    in the *oxen*  
        of Mbaranganga

(Tape recorded, on 29 September 1998 at Otuvero, transcribed and translated by me)

**Diagram 16:** *Maharero's Family Tree*



**Table 4:** *Differences in the Translations of the Rhinoceros Praise*

Concept	Ohly (1990)	mine
ozondjaṭu	skin-bags	bags
ozohe nozonyandi	veldfood	berries
ekoneva	.....	cunningness
ongondamivanda	road-crosser	passage-crosser
okotjikutwi mu mwa hit' eseno	with tardiness in the ear	with a big ear that's entered by contempt
onyanda	goat	caprine
ongokoravitamba	plot-sweeper	plot-clearer
okapera	cloaked	apron [coloured]
okuritupuk' omuhuka	starting the work early in the morning	dawn is midday
okuyendangurov' ouṭuku	leaving at dark in the evening	dusk is midnight
ombikamiti	tree-remover	tree-wrestler
mbande yongengeza	brave, outstanding man	brave wide-awake [hunter]
mbande yeyova	stupid dare-devil	brave dare-devil
mukaa Tjazupi	woman at Tjazupi	wife of Tjazupi

## Appendix 9

**Table 5: Differences in the Translations of the Maharero Praise**

Concept	Ohly (1990)	mine
otjiw' otjikangero	smoking fine	the fine for smoking
ngo	who is ...	there [is he]
ongu ri ye	who is ... or it is he or he who is himself	it's him
eye omuini	it is he himself	he himself
mbe ha ri na Ngai na Hepo	who were not with Ngai and Hepo	who had not Ngai and Hepo
okuruwo	holy fire	sacred shrine
mbi yavi tungwa nomakuiya avi ha kaiyire ozondungo	made with thorns (although) awls were (then) not lacking	which are made with thorns as if awls lack
ingwi Zeraeua	it is Zeraeua	who is Zeraeua
hi yakovandu ovengi otjimbumba mba teza	kovandu's father of numerous groups who followed ...	father of numerous people a group which tracked ...
Aze ha kakond' okarora	which did not cross over the furrow	which didn't cross a trench
oohokuru	forefathers	ancestors
okotjizire kezumo oomberipa aya piti utuku	with shadow's stomach like one just delivering a baby at night	with a shadow on the belly like a new mother at night
ngwa ri pozongombe	he was there with the cattle	who tracked the cattle
ngu teng' okuyana	who comes first	who praise first
ngwa hing' ozongombe	who led the cattle	who drove the cattle
aayo ku nozongombe nde pwa aze ri komundu	though heads of cattle do not look good on a person	as if cattle look nice on a person
ndja turura Ndovazu	that Ndovazu brought down	that Ndovazu took off
ngu ma nyinganyinga mezumo otjomuvena	who moves as if in the womb of pregnant women	who moves in the womb like a son

ovaramwe mave tja	his nephews say	his cousins say
kotjunda otjozonduwombe	to the kraal of oxen	to the kraal like oxen
nđu maze isa po omunameho omupoṭu aze mu esa nao	which take on the one who can see (but) leaving behind the blind undisturbed	which knock over the eyed person and leave the blind one undisturbed
omunyeṇanyene otjovizire koutokero	shining like the shadow during the sunset	glittering like shadows at sunset

